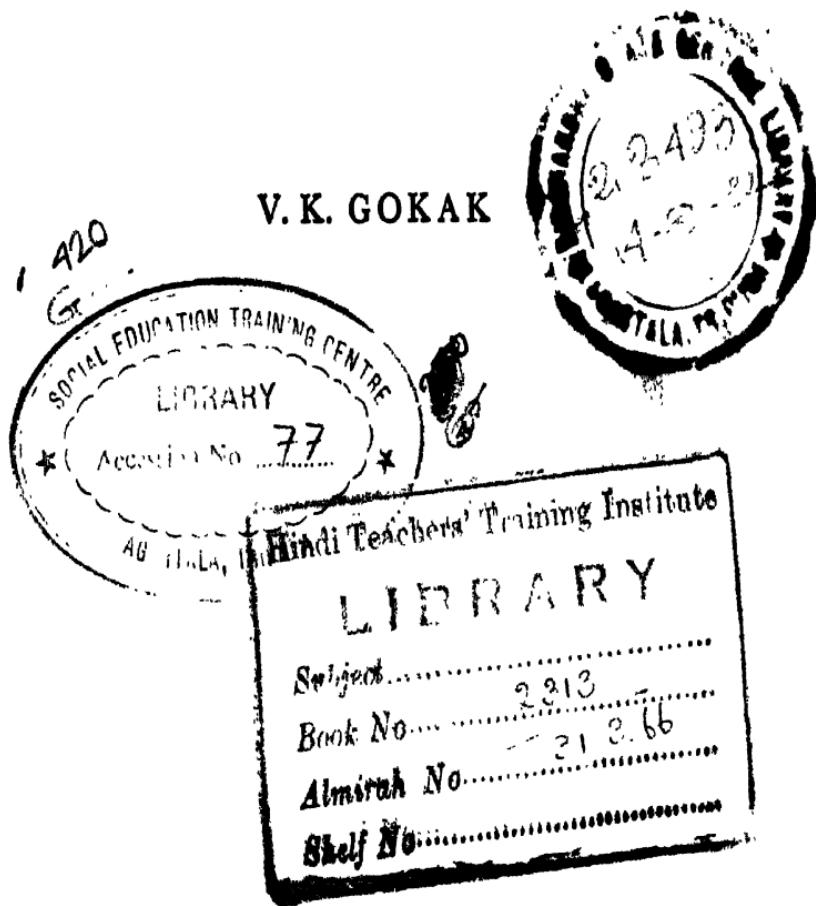


ENGLISH IN INDIA
Its Present and Future

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK has grown out of the address I delivered in Delhi in December 1960 as president of the 11th All India English Teacher's Conference. Asia Publishing House, invited me to develop it into a book. I am grateful to them for this encouragement.

This is not a book for specialists though the argument may have developed in a technical way in some contexts. This is a book for the educated Indian who is interested in tackling problems of national interest and magnitude. The place of English in our schools, colleges, offices and law courts is a problem of this kind. What the book aims at doing is to give a picture of the contemporary situation in India with regard to English and suggest remedies where these are called for. The argument is cultural or educational, pedagogical or literary, as is demanded by the context. The place of English in India is a many-sided problem and calls for approaches from several angles. I have pursued my inquiry into the subject steadily and gone wherever it has led me.

The book is also expected to interest students and teachers of English everywhere. The experiment with English as a second language in India, in the context in which it is going on today, is bound to excite the interest of students of English in countries where it is spoken as the first language and in others in which it is studied for educational and cultural purposes. I hope there is enough material in these pages to give them some satisfaction.

I am grateful to Shri. K. Subrahmanian, for going through the proofs and making some valuable suggestions. I am also grateful to Dr. B. M. Lott and Mr. H. V. George for clarification on certain points.

V. K. GOKAK

PART I

GENERAL PROBLEMS

I

ENGLISH AND THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE

It is not easy to write about the place of English in India when the country is changing every day and the place of English in it along with the country. English has been caught in that ceaseless flux which is Indian life and thought at the present time. But it is desirable to detect a point of intellectual stability in the midst of this flux and survey the present scene with an eye of detachment. A survey of this kind may help us to understand our immediate problems better and also prove to be instructive for the future.

There was a time when the Indian Professor of English was hedged in by a number of limitations. The typical Indian Professor of English then saw no life around him, only a desert. He moved like a 'ship of the desert', quenching his thirst with the holy waters that he had stored within himself from native springs during his stay at Oxford, Cambridge or London. He was not just a student and teacher of English language and literature. He measured all literary expression by the English yardstick and found no literary excellence outside English masterpieces. He was engaged in the impossible task of transplanting English literature into Indian soil or of changing the Indian soil itself so that it might favour the growth of English literature.

But there were also some Indian Professors of English who had a national perspective. They realised that, far from being an enemy of modern Indian languages, the teacher of English could be their life-giver and restorer. It is no exaggeration to say that it was in the English classroom that the Indian literary renaissance was born. Other teachers reared the infant and placed it in its own domestic setting, relating it to its great

traditions. But it was the teacher of English who breathed life into its nostrils.

We experience today another phase of this impact of English literature on our life and thought. English literature will, no doubt, continue to inspire us though in a different way. Our creative literatures have come royally into their own and the impact of English literature will not have as revolutionary a significance now as it had in the recent past. Even then, it is necessary now, more than ever, that not only English but contemporary American and European literature should be studied in our universities. A new society is growing up in Western countries, — a society brought up on technology, living in the Atomic Age and dreaming of space travel. The problems of such a society and their possible solutions will be immensely interesting and instructive to a country like ours which has just struggled towards the 'take-off' period in industrialisation. The contemporary literature of Great Britain, Europe and the United States necessarily reflects these new pressures and problems and we cannot afford to cut ourselves off from an awareness of what may be our own future in the coming years.

But the new phase of this impact is not closely related to creative writing. What has yet to grow and to experience this impact powerfully is the literature of knowledge in our languages. A literature is spineless without a simultaneous growth of this kind. Our renaissance is securely enthroned in the area of creative writing. But it has yet to take full possession of the sphere of *applied* literature, — of scientific writing, encyclopaedias and lexicons. This will not be achieved through a mere translation of standard textbooks. The national talent in this field has to be galvanized into action. It has to feel the need for original investigation and formulation. The process here may be the same as in the field of creative writing, — one of assimilation, translation, adaptation and original composition. The decade after Independence is chiefly significant for the interesting developments that have taken place in this

direction in almost all our languages.

Our grasp of the English language has to be emphasised in this context. The teacher of English was in the vanguard of the literary renaissance in India. But in the field of scientific writing, he can only see the heights, not reach them himself. The English Honours student and the teacher of English literature can now play an increasingly significant role in the field of interpretation and creative translation and present Indian classics, — ancient or modern, — in English. But they cannot, unless they are also good students of the subject concerned, translate learned books from English into their own languages. Our physicists, botanists and economists have to equip themselves with a thorough knowledge of English and of their own languages in order to enrich their literatures with standard writing on their subjects. These are now regions in which they themselves fear to tread and no sensible teacher of English will rush into them. An intensive study of the English language in our schools and colleges can alone help us to enrich our applied literatures even as a study of English literature helped us to revitalise our creative literatures in the recent past. It is only when such a cultivation leads to original writing in our languages in all modern departments of knowledge that our cultural renaissance can be said to have fully come into its own. Inaugurating the All-India Punjabi Conference at Sapru House, New Delhi, on 23rd July 1961, the Prime Minister is reported to have said: "All regional languages must be developed and promoted. But that did not mean that English should be discarded. To do that will amount to closing a window on the world of technology.... Foreign languages served as windows on it and to suppose that translations could take their place was a mistake.... It was no use getting into an intellectual prison after achieving political independence."*

Our grasp of the English language needs to be emphasised because it is the English language that

* *Times of India*, 24.7.1961.

holds the key to our comprehension of the applied literature in English. We are fumbling in our pockets for this key today. If we do not recover it in good time, we may lose it for ever. We need this key to throw open to our youngsters the window that will give them a world perspective of the problems of humanity and their possible solution. It unlocks for them the treasures of all scientific and humanistic knowledge.

Brought up as we are on a predominantly literary tradition of learning English, the notion of teaching functional English seems to stand self-condemned in our eyes. But there is no denying the fact that the English books in our school and college libraries are less and less read on each succeeding day. It is a fact that most students do not even read their prescribed books. They depend on bazaar notes to pass the examination. This is so because they have begun to experience great difficulty in comprehending standard writing in English.

Their expression in English is even poorer than their comprehension. English as a medium of examination has, in fact, broken down, for there seem to be as many kinds of English as there are candidates appearing for an examination. It seems that examiners no longer attach any importance to written expression in English but judge a candidate's answer by the substance of what he intends to say rather than what he actually says. I give below extracts from scripts submitted at the M.A. Final Examination by students specialising in English language and literature. I shall not mention either the year of submission or the University to which the scripts were submitted. The candidates who were given second class marks on the basis of their grasp of the subject, were capable of the following:

- (1) "The Pandavas while stand for good, the Kauravas stand for evil."
- (2) "The Ramayana make open before us the glories of yore."
- (3) "Ancient India can also boast for its two epics."

The candidates who obtained third class marks had many wonderful things to say:

- (4) "Rama went to jungle along with Sita..."
- (5) "Rama is asked to go in forest... Laxmana tells her mother that: "I will stay with Ram... All the country affected by Rama's departure."
- (6) "Both the heroes (Odysseus and Aeneas) wandered outside of his country."
- (7) "Suspension is an important dramatic element."
- (8) "We become in doubt that these are really the heroes of Homer."
- (9) "In course of wanderings, Odysseus meets many incidents... Odyssey is not novel because novel cannot be written in poetry."
- (10) "Virgil does not write for 'vulgar'... Dante's language is not poetical like Virgil... Dante wanted an order into society. Dante tells: Do not discourage (i.e. be discouraged)."
- (11) "Aeneas is destined to Italy... Dido is to bestow the flowers of her blooming heart on Aeneas... His heart felt to leave Dido... He pities for his friend's son... His enemies are subsided for ever."
- (12) "The Divine Comedy cannot be said an epic. No plot is there believing upon which we can say that it is an epic."
- (13) "His religious nature outburst in an unconscious way... It falls short to say that it is an epic."
- (14) "Epic is growth of time... Now we should proceed further to point out that how Inferno is an epic poetry."
- (15) "To read Milton is the last consummated reward..."

The candidate goes on to mention Milton's "proper use of the significance" (i.e. Milton's use of proper names.)

One of these candidates quotes Shakespeare's famous lines from *King Lear* as follows:

"As wanton boys are to fles
So are we to Gods."

Whether wanton boys or not, it is clear that these candidates play fast and loose with the English language. They cannot manage some of its commonest structures correctly. When they attempt a slightly higher flight, the result is ludicrous in the extreme.

We can now go to the lowest rung of the ladder and see the level of achievement of Pre-University students in English. The Central Institute of English conducted an experimental teaching course in the summer of 1960 for students who had taken the S. S. L. C. Examination. They were about to join the Pre-University class in colleges in July 1960. The course was intended to train them in the vocabulary which would be useful to them for the study of pure or social sciences. Here are typical examples of writing, all done by students who had in fact passed their S.S.L.C. Examination. To read them is like witnessing a stark, unredeemed tragedy. It may please be remembered in this connection that these students were recruited from high schools in Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and not from any mosussil schools.

"Sodo water does not contain soda. Carbondioxide is dissolved in water and sodo water made thus. If the soda water left on the table they get supprated. Sodo water as acidic. When human beings breath they take oxygen in and leave carbondioxide. Whereas plants breath they take carbon dioxide in and leave oxygen. People who work hard breath more faster than those who sits without work. On account of this fast breathing the men that work had, they produce 5 ounces carbondioxide where as who does not a work, has produce only one ounce, in the same time. When Sodo bottle is pressed it realeses carbondioxide and water. In a same way the human body realeses carbondioxide when breath is taken and water is realised from the body in the sweat."

"Electricity is very use for our. Electricity was

found many years ago. It is very high position in the world. Electric was used by people in many works. Electric gives use light. It is also used for factories and fans and every machines. Electric was taken from water. Ex:- Nizam Sagar etc. Electric was very danger— It uses in theatres. Electric is used to experiments in laboratory. From every work shop there is some electric. It is very esseienstiel for them in that work shop."

"The passage is about the Nigara Falls. The Nigara situated in two countries names America and Conodian, It is possible be in two countries because that is the beunding between U.S.A. and Conoda. The height of the falls is more than 185 the falls frozen in winter these falls Generate Electricity so it is important for industries. It's Beauty is depenedon the volume of the falls water on the American side there are sitiuted so it make the country ugly."

The two levels of performance illustrated here are more or less typical of the situation in the country as a whole. A few students, or a few schools and colleges, may give evidence of an exceptionally good standard of achievement. But these are exceptions that prove the rule. This means that the new phase of our cultural renaissance is in danger, for our knowledge of English is slipping fast between our fingers. Unless we act promptly, realise the need for and the significance of English and revise our aims in teaching it in the new setting, our national growth itself may be retarded by a strange effort which seeks to feed a mild appetite by killing it with surfeit.

II

ENGLISH AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE AND AS MEDIUM OF HIGHER LEARNING

IN A large country like India with regional languages that have a great literary tradition, there has always been the need for a *lingua franca*, an official language for interprovincial use. Sanskrit, Persian and English functioned in this way in their own time and the recognition of the official status of the last two languages was determined largely by political events. Hindi is fast coming into its own after Independence and one can expect that, in due course, it will be the official language of India.

But English cannot be displaced in a day. The pronouncement by the Prime Minister in Parliament that English will continue to be an associate official language at the Centre almost indefinitely shows that there is perfect awareness, at the highest levels, of the practical issues involved. In the speech delivered in New Delhi on 23rd July 1961, the Prime Minister is reported to have said*: "He referred to the demand for introducing Punjabi in the State's High Court and said that, if the work of the various High Courts in the country was carried on in their respective regional languages, it might create problems for the Supreme Court." A federal language is essential for such purposes and English will have to function as a federal language till Hindi can take its place.

The best way to promote Hindi as an official language is to evolve a simplified Hindi with close lexical affinities with the leading languages of the country, bring up a new generation on it instead of requiring

* The *Deccan Chronicle*, Hyderabad.

government officials to change their horses in mid-stream, and prepare in all other ways for the day on which this generation will change over from the cradle to the saddle.

Similarly, one fails to see how Hindi can be the medium for the All-India competitive examinations without compromising one's sense of equity and fair play. Even if, as has been suggested, it is made obligatory for a Hindi-speaking student to offer a course unit in a modern Indian language other than Hindi, the handicap will not be of the same magnitude as that of a non-Hindi candidate who is required to answer the papers on all the course units in Hindi. Even if the latter is permitted to answer the question papers in English, he will not obviously stand in the same relation to English as the Hindi-speaking candidate does to Hindi. If, on the other hand, each candidate is permitted to use his own regional language as the medium of examination, the basis for competition and selection can only be regional, not national, and the national character of the services will disappear. At the same time, when Hindi becomes the principal official language with English as its associate, it is essential that each official of the Central Government should know Hindi well. The problem thus bristles with difficulties on all sides and any hasty solution will only generate bitterness and controversy. A possible solution lies in the development of federal Hindi, a Hindi which dispenses with its grammatical gender, whereby its grammatical machinery would become considerably simplified. It should draw freely on the vocabulary of the other Indian languages so that every Indian feels that Hindi has some points of affinity with his own language. This may bring Hindi home to the South as well as to the North.

The text of the statement adopted by the National Integration Conference accepts the three-language formula. The Conference "recognised that Hindi must develop ultimately as the link for inter-State communication, but felt that, since the process of development

involved the expression of modern concepts in the language, that process would occupy some time and, till Hindi developed suitably, English would continue to serve the purpose that it had served so far as a medium of inter-State communication".

The medium of instruction in our universities is also a thorny problem. The Union Education Minister announced in 1959 in Parliament that the policy would be to promote the regional languages as media of university instruction in due course. But a number of difficulties arise when one begins to think of its implementation. Academic life in the country will suffer from dangerous fragmentation if the medium of university instruction is regionalised. No national exchange of teachers and examiners will be possible. A kind of academic inbreeding will set in in each State and its results may well be disastrous for the intellectual life of the country as a whole. In the speech referred to earlier in this chapter the Prime Minister is reported to have said: "Regional languages should serve as media of instruction for purposes of primary and secondary education. But to adopt them for university education would cause a lot of confusion. It would not then be possible to have any meetings of minds."

This point of view seems to have been pressed by the Prime Minister at the conference of Chief Ministers that met at Delhi on 10th and 11th August, 1961 to discuss the ways and means of promoting national integration. The *Deccan Chronicle* (12th August, 1961) reported: "English should continue as the medium of instruction, opined the Chief Ministers here today. They also felt that it should not be replaced in a hurry." The *Times of India* had this to say (12th August, 1961): "It was broadly agreed that the mother tongue should be the medium in the primary stage and the State language at the secondary stage. Opinion on the medium at the University stage was, however, divided. While some urged that the medium should be the regional language, others agreed with Mr. Nehru that this would tend to isolate learning in

the higher stages by keeping students and teachers from other regions away."

But one cannot, at the same time, deny the validity of the regionalist's claim to attention. His plea for recognition of regional media in universities cannot be dismissed as a sentimental demand. Many of the modern Indian languages have as old a literary tradition as that of English itself and some of them have an older tradition. It is only with the advent of the Renaissance in Europe that a disparity becomes perceptible in their parallel growth and enrichment. But the Indian Renaissance has enabled them to make considerable headway in creative literature and there is a strong movement afoot now to enrich the literature of knowledge in these languages. In the circumstances, to deny these languages the status of university media of instruction in their own regions would amount to a cancellation of their legitimate growth and consummation. In fact, their recognition as university media will itself be a powerful impetus to their growth and enrichment.

The problem of a change in the medium is, therefore, a perplexing problem. There is no satisfying solution to it unless we can reconcile irreconcilable claims and promote regional as well as national aspirations without permitting them to conflict with each other. The Kunzru Committee, appointed by the University Grants Commission to report on the question of medium of instruction and the teaching of English, reported as follows:

Most of the university people with whom we had discussions were emphatically of the view that the change from English to an Indian language as the medium of instruction at the university stage should not be unduly hastened. This view was expressed not only by teachers of the natural sciences but also by teachers of the humanities and social sciences. The change to an Indian language, they said, should be preceded by an adequate preparation both in the

cultivation of the Indian language concerned as a medium of expression for learned purposes and by preparation of a sufficient body of learned literature in that language in all subjects of study. It is not enough to have a few textbooks translated into the Indian languages. It should be necessary to have original books written and an adequate literature created in these languages.

But how can the national perspective be preserved once it is agreed that an Indian language is fully developed and can be a university medium of instruction? The Official Language Commission has the following suggestions to make in its Report:

"(1) Universities should have the freedom to decide for themselves whether they would adopt the regional language or Hindi as the general medium in their respective Universities. (2) It may be left to the Universities themselves to decide in concert with each other, and after due deliberation in their established organs of consultation like the Inter-University Board, in what faculties, particularly in the professional subjects and Natural Sciences, and at what stages, particularly whether in the post-graduate stage, the teaching should be through a common medium of Hindi *alone* in all Universities on the displacement of the English medium. (3) All Universities should in any event be required to arrange to *examine* the students offering themselves for any university examinations with Hindi as the medium of instruction. (4) All affiliating Universities should also be under obligation to offer affiliation on equal terms to any colleges or institutions teaching through Hindi as the medium of instruction for any of their courses in the territorial jurisdiction of the University."

Clauses No. 3 and 4 in this extract provide for ease of inter-State mobility and migration. English and

Hindi, when it succeeds English, should be recognised as media of instruction and examination within the sphere indicated in the interest of migratory families or group of families. Clause No. 2, on the other hand, seeks to provide for the national situation by suggesting that, for all subjects at the post-graduate stage and for the professional subjects and natural sciences at all stages in the universities, the medium of instruction and examination should be the federal language.

But the implications of clause No. 2 will not be quite acceptable to the regionalist. This provision will be regarded by him as a stultification of regional aspirations. If a language is good enough to be medium for some subjects and stages, it should, he would contend, be equally good for other subjects and stages. It is one thing to say that a language should gradually evolve towards such a consummation and quite another to hold that it should never come into its own because it obscures national issues.

A solution has therefore to be found which can meet the demand from the regional as well as the national point of view. One measure in this direction is, to put it in the words of the Kunzru Committee Report: "To retain English as a properly studied second language in our universities even when an Indian language is used as the ordinary medium of teaching. By this means we shall maintain our inter-national, intellectual and academic contacts and make possible a growing exchange of students and teachers not only among our own universities but also between universities in this country and universities in many other parts of the world." Another measure is to make compulsory an adequate knowledge of what is called federal Hindi. The moment we think of a regional medium, we must also think of training students intensively in English and in federal Hindi. The training should be so intensive that it should matter little to them, whether a teacher teaches them through a regional language, English or federal Hindi, even if the medium of examination happens to be the regional language.

It is only in this way that a constant flow of talent on an all-India basis and a living awareness of national unity can be secured in the academic sphere. A third measure is to offer incentives for the study of an additional Indian language specially to students who wish to join the teaching profession. If a Maharashtrian knows Gujarathi also in addition to Marathi, English and federal Hindi, and a Tamilian knows Telugu, and so on, it will be possible to keep up the inter-State or national status of our academic life in instruction as well as examination. A fourth measure can make Hindi and English additional media of instruction (not necessarily of examination) under specific conditions and make it obligatory for each University to recognise them as such. The regional language will, of course, be the chief medium of instruction. But there will always be a need for talented teachers of various subjects from anywhere, specially at the Honours and post-graduate levels. These can be permitted to lecture in English or in federal Hindi. Needless to say, the entire process set forth in this paragraph will be greatly facilitated if we can succeed in adopting one script, — the *Dev Nagari* or international phonetic script, — for the modern Indian languages. But that perhaps is asking for too much immediately. A federal Hindi, however, is a great need and a good deal of the opposition to Hindi will lose its edge if a new kind of Hindi emerges as the federal language.

There is also the hope held out by the National Integration Conference that the "distance between the different Indian languages could diminish as the stock of modern new words for new concepts grows, as it is bound to with the advancement of learning". Apart from new words and concepts, even inter-lingual interests promoted by bodies like the *Sahitya Akademi* and the All-India Radio are sure to speed up this process.

The Chief Ministers' Conference, held in Delhi in August 1961, considered the question of language in its various aspects, from the point of view of national

integration. The Prime Minister presided over the Conference. It was agreed that *Dev Nagari* should be promoted as the uniform script of all the modern Indian languages, as soon as possible. The question of the medium for university education was also discussed at length. "The tendency of regional languages to become the media of university education, though desirable in many ways, may well lead to the isolation of such universities from the rest of India unless there is a link in the shape of an all-India language.... Such a common link can only be English or Hindi. Ultimately it will have to be Hindi.... Till such time as this happens, English may be continued. It may also be possible and desirable for the change-over from English to Hindi or a regional language to be phased or divided up into subjects. Thus scientific and technical subjects might be taught for as long as necessary in English. Other subjects may be taught with Hindi or the regional language as the medium. In any event, the standard of teaching both in Hindi and English should be improved and maintained at a high level in schools and colleges."

The Conference also emphasised the importance of English in the present educational context and the development of Hindi so as to enable it to play its role as an all-India language of inter-State communication in place of English, as soon as practicable.

It will be seen that, while conceding the status of university media to regional languages, the Conference emphasises the need for a high standard of teaching both in English and Hindi, in order to keep up the unity of academic life in the country.

This is also, more or less, the position reached during the deliberations of the National Integration Conference. The statement issued by the Conference admits that English will have to be used, till Hindi is adequately developed, "at all stages of higher education, particularly so at the level of postgraduate study and advanced research.... While a plea was made for the use of Hindi as the medium on an all-India basis,

the general view was that the regional languages are bound to replace English as the medium of instruction as soon as the necessary preparations for the change-over could be made acceptable to the academic world". But in such an arrangement there would be the need for a link language which is understood all over India. The link language would ultimately be Hindi. But English would serve this purpose till Hindi, like any other regional language, attains its full development.

The Chief Ministers expressed the view that the change-over from English to Hindi or a regional language would have to be phased according to subjects. But they as well as the University Grants Commission agreed that this would not be necessary if "all technical and scientific common words, including well-known international terms, are included in the technical terminology based on international usage and are common to most of the Indian languages". The National Integration Conference endorses this view of the problem.

The statement issued by the Conference also stresses that "the study of Hindi and English should be commenced at an early stage". It lays down that Hindi must "continue to be taught as second language in the secondary stage of education" and that English, "apart from continuing as a transitional link, would remain a language of international importance for helping in the enrichment of our languages and the advancement of learning and technology."

When everything is said and done, one can almost be sure that this question will be decided by the developments in our political life and by the economic progress made in the country. If there are opportunities for cultured life and material well-being within a given region there will not be much incentive for inter-State migration. A large majority of guardians will then send their wards to regional medium schools and

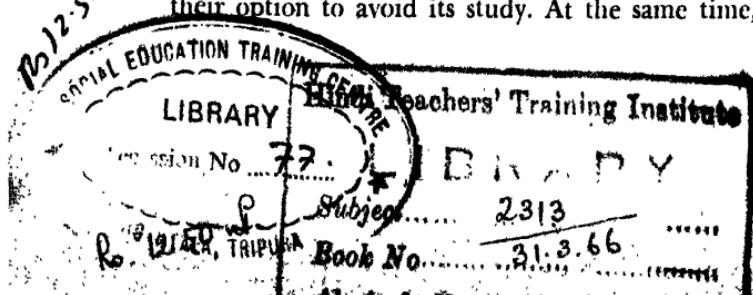
colleges. They will be satisfied if their wards have some knowledge of Hindi and English. Only a few students, who wish to make their mark in the interprovincial or international sphere, will go to schools and colleges which use Hindi or English as the medium of instruction and examination.

This can be inferred from the trend of events in our educational life today. Every guardian is anxious that his ward should be a university graduate. There has been a tremendous expansion and democratisation of higher education in recent years. Because the medium of instruction continues to be English in most of the universities, guardians are anxious that their wards should know English well so that they can fare satisfactorily in the universities. But the teaching of English has deteriorated considerably in our schools. Many guardians are, therefore, anxious that their wards should join English medium schools so that they will experience no difficulty with regard to the English medium in Universities. This is especially true of the educational situation in our metropolitan cities. The non-regional population in each region favours English medium schools since the regional language does not offer many opportunities of employment to them and since the cultivation of their mother-tongue has only limited uses in that direction. The regional population which feels that it is not politically strong enough to secure suitable opportunities within the region for itself also tends to do the same. No regional aspirations can stand in the way of enlightened self-interest. Even groups that dominate the life in their own region prefer to send their children to English medium schools, for they have an eye on an inter-provincial or an international career for their wards. It is only in rural schools that the regional medium is accepted. This is largely so because the rural population has no choice in the matter.

State governments are interested now in running regional medium schools. English medium schools are mostly the result of private effort. In spite of the transitional increase in the demand for English medium schools, one wonders whether it is a trend in the right direction. The demand is there because there is no adequate provision in schools for teaching English effectively, — the kind and amount of English that enables the school-leaving pupils to follow university courses of study with ease and write their answers in correct English in university examinations. Guardians are even prepared to forego the advantage of instruction through the mother-tongue at the secondary stage in order to see that their wards secure an adequate knowledge of English by attending English medium schools before they join a university. If provision is made in each school for a thorough and intensive teaching of English, so as to promote the skills both of comprehension and expression to the needed level, the anxiety of guardians will be allayed and English medium schools will continue to serve only exceptional needs.

The regional language cannot be envisaged for several years as a full-fledged medium of higher education. It would be disastrous to bring about a change without proper planning. This can be done only in stages, for higher education in science and technology will take years before it can be imparted effectively through regional media. It would, therefore, be wise at this stage to think of the *content* itself of higher education, rather than its media, be a little more patient with the *status quo* and make it effective by improving and refashioning the teaching of English in our schools and colleges.

It is reported that even in States like Uttar Pradesh, where English was optional, very few students exercised their option to avoid its study. At the same time, the



studies which have been made of the external examinations for successive years at the end of the secondary school show that "the percentage of the total passes (or failures) is directly proportional to the percentage of passes (or failures) in English". English, therefore, "demands much greater attention than before, alike in content and in the manner of its teaching."*

* *The Position of English Teaching in the States of India*, issued by the Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

III

THE TRILINGUAL SITUATION IN INDIA AND THE PROPER AGE FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

BILINGUALISM has been described as the practice of making alternate use of two languages. English was part of this bilingual situation in India till Hindi was recognised as an official language at the Centre. The situation has developed into a trilingual one since then.

It has been claimed by educationists that it is only in the mother-tongue that a child goes through the socialising process that helps him to master language. He acquires his second language intellectually, not *via* the emotions as he does his mother-tongue. The mother-tongue expresses better the emotional and volitional aspects of a child's personality. His intellectual growth is bound up with a gradual perception of the relationship between symbol (words as signs and as sound-complexes), thought and thing. Both as medium and as school subject, the mother-tongue plays a great part in the growth of the child's personality in all its aspects.

We can assume, then, that a trilingual situation is inevitable in the country where the mother-tongue of the child is identical with its regional language. Where it is not, the child tends to face a bilingual situation, bypassing the original language in favour of Hindi. Where the child's parents think that a knowledge of the regional language is essential on his part, the child may even have to face a tetralingual situation.

There are four possibilities for the use of English in a context of this kind.

- (a) English as the exclusive language of instruc-

tion from early age, with either the mother-tongue or Hindi taught as a subject. This is the situation in our English medium schools today. But these are not typical of the large majority of schools in the country.

(b) English as the proposed predominant language but with concessions to the mother-tongue as medium at the primary stage. These concessions were extended to the secondary stage also during the thirties of this century. This was generally the position in the country before Independence.

(c) English as an equal partner with the mother-tongue and with the federal language. This is the position that many of us have been keen on adopting after Independence. This means a reduction of the importance attached to English. English will be an associate official language at the Centre. Some universities have already introduced the language of their region as the medium of instruction at least for Arts subjects. Eventually other universities are expected to do the same. The idea is to gradually regionalise the medium for the teaching of all subjects. There will be a few English medium colleges to provide for inter-State mobility. These may later change into Hindi medium colleges.

(d) English as a foreign language which a student can study just as he studies French or German now. This will complete the process begun under (b). The regional or federal language will be the medium of instruction for all subjects even at the highest level.

This is a natural and legitimate development and no one need have any quarrel with it if it evolves spontaneously and without sacrificing the content of courses of study and compromising the quality of the products of this learning process. But there are two snags in this argument, two steps that we have omitted to take: (1) When we regionalised the medium of secondary education in the thirties and retained English as university medium at the same time, we should have

provided for a better teaching of English as a subject, both intensively and extensively. This would have made the transition smooth for matriculates. But we did not do it. And we have been paying for it during the last twenty years and more in terms of a steady deterioration in the quality of university graduates. (2) At the other end, we have started regionalising university media without examining the position and making sure that our languages are ready to take over from English. We are also making no attempt to safeguard the unity of our academic life by reconciling regional and national claims. This will affect the quality of our higher education even more adversely. Because we omitted to do the right thing at the right time, we have now to make desperate efforts in both these directions, — teach English better and more thoroughly in order to enable students to cope with the English medium in universities and enrich the applied literature in regional languages through planned effort so that our languages can take over from English.

It cannot be said that a simultaneous acquisition of two languages, which is the process that goes on in English medium schools, is an unmixed blessing. The bilingual child, except for really able children, tends to have less than two languages but more than one. His attainment in other subjects, especially in subjects requiring abstract reasoning, is also affected in the early stages because of this. The educational programme becomes excessively linguistic. The products of English medium schools are generally well up in English; but they tend to be weak in other subjects.

A discussion of the remarks made by Mr. Wilder Penfield, a neuro-surgeon from Canada, will be useful in this context. In his talks broadcast over AIR and published by the Planning Commission, Mr. Penfield says:

“If public education is to incorporate in the curriculum secondary languages, the curriculum should be planned according to the changing aptitudes of the human brain. When new languages are taken up for

the first time in the second decade of life, it is difficult, though not impossible, to achieve a good result. It is difficult because it is unphysiological. The learning is no longer direct. Instead, the speech units of the mother-tongue are interposed.... The time to begin what might be called a general schooling in secondary languages, in accordance with the demands of brain physiology is between the ages of 4 and 10.... For all I know this might be carried out with one language in the morning and the other in the afternoon since in any case the entrance into the morning class would be a conditional reflex that started the child in the one language while the entrance into the afternoon class might be a continuing reflex for starting him into the second language. If this method were to be employed in this country in areas, for example, where the mother-tongue is neither English nor Hindi, teachers would have to be found who could conduct the first years in Hindi, others perhaps in English. They need not be specially trained in language teaching. After those primary years it would matter little what tongue was used in subsequent teaching. The growing child could later expand his vocabulary in any one or in all these languages with relative ease.... The human brain specialises in the learning of languages before the ages of 10 to 14. After that, gradually, inevitably, it seems to become rigid, slow, less receptive. In regard to this function it grows old all too fast."

This learning is to be effected through what Mr. Penfield calls the mother's method: "Even before he understands, the mother talks to her child. And while he is learning he is listened to (usually I may say with delighted admiration).... One secret of the success of this method is that it is employed while a child is forming the speech units in his eager little brain."

The original units which he forms in this way are more than motor skills of tongue and lip: "They are units of sound and units of thought established in a physical form within the brain. He uses these units over and over again while he is constructing the nerve

cell basis of each new word, and he deposits these word patterns in special areas of the cerebral cortex." The child can utilise these language units later for all additions to his vocabulary.

The handicap that faces the child in the learning of second and third languages at a stage beyond the age level recommended by him, is described by Mr. Penfield in this way: "If during the early period of life a child is in contact with people who speak other languages, he will lay down language units of each of those secondary languages whether they are Hindi, English, Arabic or Chinese. And the few hundreds of words that he acquires early in each language may seem to be lost, but the speech units never. Even a less used language can be expanded later with relative ease."

"A child who has heard only one language, and who approaches the second and third language later, employs the language units of his mother-tongue for all the others. He is now in the stage or should be for expanding his vocabulary normally, and he tries to use the units of native Hindi, for example, when studying the perplexing mysteries of the English tongue. All the rules of syntax and grammar in all the adult books of speech analysis are of little help."

Hindi can be taught with advantage in this way as a federal language, beginning in the third or fourth standard. Hindi has much in common with the other Indian languages, from the point of view of phonetics, grammar and vocabulary. A specially modified federal Hindi will even be nearer to the child. Non-Hindi people have frequent contacts with people in the Hindi areas and Hindi teachers can easily be trained in the teaching of spoken as well as written Hindi.

But it is doubtful whether this can be done for English. The contacts with people who speak English as their mother-tongue are not possible all over the country. Even if it is decided that teachers trained in English medium schools should be used for this purpose, one does not know how many products of this kind can be persuaded to be primary teachers. If, as

is often the case, unqualified and untrained teachers are assigned this work, the child may begin with a wrong foundation in the language which it would be difficult to efface later.

Again, Mr. Penfield himself suggests that "the human brain specialises in the learning of languages before the ages of 10 to 14". He says earlier: "It may be convenient for those who must plan the school curriculum to postpone the teaching of secondary language until the second decade of life. But the plan will never do what we should like to have it do. It defies the laws of progressive change in the capacity of the brain." But it is easier for us if the first decade of life can be stretched so as to include the age level of 14. Children start learning English in most of our schools in the fifth or sixth standard, — when they are 11 or 12 years old. If this is in conformity with the physiological laws that Mr. Penfield refers to, our children stand a better chance of learning English through the greater availability of trained and qualified teachers of English at that stage.

There is also another point of view which has to be reckoned with in this connection. It is better stated in the words of Mr. Peter Wingard of Makerere College, Uganda: "It is possible that the tendency, in many countries towards an earlier and earlier starting of English, while a sign of increasing demand for English, ought to be resisted on practical grounds rather than encouraged: (a) It increases the proportion of *wasted* teaching to pupils who never get far enough to really be able to use their English.... (b) It increases the amount of bad teaching of English to beginners. Teachers are drawn into teaching English who are not trained for the job, and whose own English is inadequate. (c) It lessens the time and attention available for teaching the children to read and write the *first* language during these years.

"We often hear the argument that young children are better at language learning than older ones. But it is not always made clear that this is only true of the

learning of a language in a situation of immediate use. Learning a language in the classroom without this immediacy is a different kettle of fish. Here it is the older child who feels the stronger motivation."*

Mr. Wingard goes on to say that, in the Makerere experimental classes, the 8 and 9 year-old beginners do not seem to do so well as the older ones. "In comparing classes who have begun English in year 3 and year 4 of school we find that the latter have learnt more at the end of a year. In fact, ordinary year 4 classes taught by ordinary primary teachers have learned more than year 3 classes which have been taught or supervised by experts, doing all they knew! This is worth pondering. It may be partly due to the large proportion of pupils who repeat classes. But it suggests that we cannot just shrug off poor results in lower classes as being due to bad teaching."

If it is conceded that children should learn to read and write the first language moderately well before beginning to learn to read and write English, at what age can we expect children to achieve this moderate proficiency? Mr. Wingard thinks that, in the Kampala area, he would judge it very roughly to be about the age of 9.

Should this mean that the teaching of English should be delayed till the age of 9? Or should the other alternative of a long period of oral English be adopted for the 6 to 8 year-olds?

Mr. Wingard is not so sure that this second alternative is useful. We do not in fact have a body of second-language teaching method really suited to the 6 to 8 year-olds. Such experiments as have been made in this field are still inconclusive. "Play and activity methods would have to be used and language items would have to be chosen on the basis of their immediate interest and use." But Mr. Wingard thinks that this needs doing for older beginners too. He suggests that we ought to be chary of the earlier introduction of English,

* Working paper submitted to the first Commonwealth Conference on the teaching of English as a second language, January, 1961.

except where it is the main medium in schools, "until we have solid experimental evidence of successful methods, and until these have become fairly well-known to teacher-trainers".

It should thus be clear that there is not much of a case for the view of those educationists who insist on the teaching of English as a second language from the day the child enters school. The other view that demands a full mastery of the native tongue before a new language is learnt finds more favour today.

Mr. Wingard thinks that a child should learn to read and write English at about the age of 9. Belgian educationists think, on the other hand, that the introduction of the second-language should be deferred to the post-primary stage. Michael West and Otto Jespersen also think that a too early contact with the second language is detrimental to both the second language and the mother-tongue. The commencement of the post-primary stage may differ from country to country. In India, it is generally the fifth year of the child's school career.

The question, therefore, can now be framed in this way. Should a child learn to read and write English at the age of 9 or 11? Ours is a trilingual situation. I have suggested in a foregoing paragraph that the child may be started on Hindi at the age of 9, since Hindi is generally in the air around us and since it is easy to have trained teachers of Hindi to teach in schools. A child can begin learning English as a second language at the age of 11.

The teaching of English as a second language begins at three different stages in our schools today. The report by the Languages Committee appointed by the Government of West Bengal (1960) recommends as follows:

We felt that the earlier the foundations of the learning of English were laid, its acquisition would be easier and more fruitful. We were fortified in this view both by the results actually achieved in schools

that still adhered to the previous practice of an early commencement of English as also by the opinions of modern experts that the introduction of a foreign tongue to learners should precede the formation of a rigid thought-concept in the learner's mind.... We, therefore, hold that English should begin not later than in class III.

The Report then recommends the learning of Sanskrit:

A classical language (or its alternative French, German or Russian) from class V to class VIII — compulsory for all, with permission to take it up as an elective subject in classes IX, X and XI for students of the Humanities group, and as a fourth elective subject for students of other groups.

As for Hindi, the Report recommends that:

Hindi should be taught orally in class VIII without home preparation and introduction of textbooks. This should be followed up by an intensive course of study of Hindi language and literature in class IX for those who want to read Hindi further, when the compulsory study of the classical language may be dropped for those students. There should also be a provision for teaching Hindi in classes X and XI as an extra subject for those who want to read Hindi, but it will not be a subject for public examination.

There are four notes of dissent attached to this Report. One of them states that only two languages should be taught compulsorily, — Bengali and English — as the teaching of other subjects tends to be crowded out. Other languages should count as optional subjects which a pupil may take up for study if he likes to. The second note of dissent is mainly concerned with the neglect of Hindi in the Report, suggesting that Hindi should be included as one of the languages alternative to Sanskrit for serious study. The third note of dissent

accepts the principle that four languages should be taught at school but suggests that Sanskrit and Hindi should be non-examination subjects: "English which will be the second language should be begun not earlier than in class V and continued up to the end of 'the school stage.' " The note goes on to say: "In the British period the standard of English, it is said, was higher. How much of that was due to English having been introduced earlier and how much to the fact that English was then the medium of instruction is a point to be considered seriously. I know my colleagues would not like to make English once more the medium of instruction, but they would like to introduce English as early as possible. In this connection they refer to what they call the rigid formation of thought concepts. I am afraid that I do not clearly see their point. Thought concepts are formed and should be formed in the mother-tongue early in life and their formation should be allowed without any interference whatsoever. If my colleagues are serious on this point, I think they would logically be constrained to recommend the teaching of English even in the mother's lap.

"In my opinion, therefore, English should be introduced only after four years of schooling. Modern researches largely support this view and hold that, excepting for a certain amount of oral skill in the use of a language, reading and comprehension ability in a foreign language comes better if it is introduced later, after a child has obtained a certain amount of mastery over his own language.... A second language, specially when it is a foreign language, should be taught as far as possible by teachers who are properly equipped for the task. The average primary school teacher is far from being properly equipped for this difficult and delicate work.... My colleagues refer to the results achieved in schools that still adhere to the previous practice of an early commencement of English.... (Good English) scholars have, in fact, come mostly from the ordinary schools where English is introduced later.... I submit that the objective of my colleagues would be more

properly achieved, not by introducing English early, but by the introduction of modern methods of teaching under the guidance of properly qualified teachers. Fortunately we have today methods like the structure method of teaching English...."

The fourth note of dissent, like the second one, is in favour of including Hindi as an alternative to Sanskrit.

West Bengal is thus a State where English is taught in class III, when the child has completed its eighth year. The second pattern which is envisaged in one of the minutes of dissent, — that of the commencement of English teaching in class V — obtains in some of the other States. An idea of the stage at which English is introduced in schools in the various States, is given on pages 32(a) and 32(b). This was the position as in June, 1960.

The second pattern is one of a child of 11 or 12 being given 5, 6 or 7 years of English teaching. Assam comes next to West Bengal in the longer duration of English teaching, — 7 years with 7 periods per week. Kashmir also has a somewhat similar syllabus. Orissa comes very close, with 6 years of English teaching at the rate of 8 periods per week. The other States tend to fall more or less into a separate category, considering the duration and the number of periods per week given to the teaching of English. If Delhi teaches English for six years with six hours per week, Madras teaches for 7 years, with $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 periods per week. Uttar Pradesh teaches English for 5 years with 6 to 9 periods per week. Andhra Pradesh falls into this category but gives perhaps the shortest measure of time to the teaching of English, — 6 years with 4 hours per week. But it reckons in terms of 'hours', not periods so that the time given is not so scanty as it seems to be. We may take Madras as being typical of this group.

The third pattern is the one set by Gujarat. English is taught there at the age of 14. This is done for 4 years at the rate of 12 periods per week. Since there is a late commencement, there is an attempt here at hitting the target by intensifying the teaching of English during

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<i>State</i>	<i>Age of the Child</i>	<i>Duration till the End of The Secondary or Higher Secondary Course</i>	<i>Class in which English is Introduced</i>	<i>Approximate Number of Periods per Week</i>
ANDHRA PRADESH	12th year	6 years (high school)	VI	4 hours per week
ASSAM	10th year	7 years (higher Sec. sch.)	IV	7 periods per week
DELHI	12th year	6 years	VI	6 hours per week
GUJARAT	14th year	4 years (high school)	VIII	12 periods per week
KERALA	11th year	6 years (high school)	V	7 periods of 45 minutes' duration each in the upper primary classes and 6 periods a week in high school classes
MADHYA PRADESH	12th year	6 years (high school)	VI	6 periods of 40 minutes each per week
MADRAS	11th year	7 years (high school)	V	4½ hours per week and 6 hours per week in some schools
MAHARASHTRA	14th year (compulsory) 11th year (optional)	4 years (compulsory) 7 years (optional)	VIII (compulsory) V	Optional. But compulsory from V in D & B schools in South Maharashtra

32b ENGLISH IN INDIA — ITS PRESENT AND FUTURE

TABLE (*Continued*)

<i>State</i>	<i>Age of the Child</i>	<i>Duration till the End of The Secondary or Higher Secondary Course</i>	<i>Class in which English is Introduced</i>	<i>Approximate Number of Periods per Week</i>
MYSORE	11th year	6 years	V	6 periods per week
ORISSA	12th year	6 years	VI	8 periods per week
PUNJAB	12th year	6 years (higher secondary school)	VI	6 hours per week
RAJASTHAN	12th year	5 years (high school)	VI	About 6 to 9 periods
		6 years in most of the schools (even in I or in III in some aided schools)		
UTTAR PRADESH	12th year	5 years (high school)	VI	6 periods per week in VI to VIII and 6 to 9 in IX and X. Each period is about 35 to 40 minutes' duration

the four years of high school. The circular letter sent by the Education Department, Gujarat State, dated 22nd June 1960, states that the practice of teaching English from Standard V to VII outside school hours will be permitted to be continued, but that no grants will be paid on the expenditure for these classes. On the other hand, the teaching of English will be intensified in standards VIII to X by devoting 12 out of 45 periods per week to it. A corresponding reduction is made in the teaching of other subjects. These 12 periods will be suitably distributed over oral work, written work, grammar, composition, structures, translation, etc.

These three patterns have, then, been evolved to meet the needs of the bilingual situation, — the inevitable dependence on English, either as medium of instruction or as an aid to higher learning in the universities. Gujarat University is fast regionalising the medium on the Arts side and it may be said that English will be used by students in that Faculty more for the purposes of comprehension than of expression. But we should not forget the fact that the pattern of English teaching at school is the same for students who join other Faculties later, — Science, Medicine, Engineering. These students will have to use English for the purposes of expression also, since English will continue to be the medium of instruction and examination in these subjects for some time to come.

Since we have to face a trilingual situation, the question may arise whether two languages, — Hindi and English — can be taught simultaneously to the child that speaks a regional language. Expert opinion is divided on the subject. On the whole, it seems safe to conclude that teaching the third language should be delayed until the second language is well under way.

There are certain factors which promote or limit a child's progress in learning English, whichever of the three patterns we adopt for the purpose. Children coming from families with a strong religious bent may be interested in learning Sanskrit or Arabic rather than

English. The attitude of the teacher and of the public, generally speaking, to English also counts towards the proper motivation of the child in its learning process. The child's own attitude is of considerable importance. If the child needs English only for vocational purposes, he will not be interested in an extra load of English, in all the finer points of usage. Much will also depend on the relationship of his own language to English, — on the points of similarity and dissimilarity between the two languages. The child's achievement in English will also be partly determined by the employment of a co-ordinate or compound language process, — or whether he is taught English through a mixed dialect or exclusively through the English language itself. If it is the latter, he stands a better chance of mastering the structure of English.

Of the three patterns, the West Bengal one has the advantage of catching the child at a tender age so that he is likely to be more spontaneously and effortlessly receptive to the sounds and structures of a different language. This pattern satisfies Mr. Penfield's requirements more than the other two. But if English is to be taught from class III onwards, many more trained teachers will be required. The West Bengal Education Department has the idea of recruiting for the purpose teachers who have themselves been educated in English medium schools. It would be interesting to see how far the Department succeeds in this endeavour. A wrong foundation in the teaching of English at an early age is likely to be worse than delayed commencement. If good teachers are available, the longer duration of the course will undoubtedly enable pupils to be more familiar with spoken and written English. The fact that it is difficult to get so many trained teachers of English is indicated by the decision taken by the Education Ministers of the four southern States on 28th October 1961. They favoured the commencement of the study of English from the third standard and decided that a common syllabus should be prepared for this purpose. But they left it to individual States to

phase their programme according to the availability of teachers and other facilities.

This pattern seems to have found favour with the Education Departments of several States. West Bengal has adopted it and the four South Indian States have decided to adopt it. Uttar Pradesh has favoured this pattern and Rajasthan and the Panjab also will probably go the same way.

The second pattern, which advocates the teaching of English at the age of 11 or 12, is based on similar lines, though it is less ambitious. It makes room for the introduction of Hindi teaching at the age of 9, if that is contemplated. A period of six or seven years provides for adequate familiarity with the language. Here, again, everything turns upon the availability of good and trained teachers. The first years of English teaching now tend to be in the charge of teachers who are not graduates and who have received some training only in training schools. They receive training in Methods when they are not properly conversant with the English language itself.

The third pattern, adopted by Gujarat, represents a drastic departure from these two. It hovers perilously on the border line of Mr. Penfield's thesis, — for pupils start learning English under this scheme in their 14th year. But this, as we have seen, need not bother us much. It is possible to think that, in a classroom situation, a foreign language is learnt better later than earlier. The Department has provided for double the number of periods approximately, — 12 per week for 4 years instead of 6 per week for 6 or 7 years. One can also be fairly sure of securing the services of qualified and trained teachers at this stage, for high school teaching, as distinguished from middle school teaching, is generally in the hands of trained graduates. The one serious handicap which this pattern may have to face is the comparative rigidity which a pupil is likely to develop at this age towards the acquisition of new tongues and the truncation of the period of familiarity which, more often than not, takes a student to supple-

nientary reading material in the language for entertainment or pleasure at his own leisure. The high school years, according to the curriculum, will be heavily loaded on the language side and it may not be possible to give adequate time and attention to the teaching of other subjects.

It would be interesting to evaluate the achievements of pupils under each one of these patterns in their own areas and arrive at a comparative view. We will then be able to say which one of them is the most practicable for the purpose in the present national context. If a comparative view is to be arrived at, the evaluation of the schemes will have to be based on similar data, — on a test of the products of these schools under the three schemes, the schools selected being as much on a par with each other in the matter of staffing, amenities and environment as it is possible for schools to be. One can test students from these schools soon after they have appeared for the school-leaving examination. The same comprehensive test will have to be administered to all of them.

Naturally, the objectives of such a test will need to be precisely formulated. The secondary or higher secondary course can be regarded either as a terminal or as a preparatory course. If it is the latter, it will have to prepare students in most of our universities, for receiving university education with English as their medium of instruction and examination. The Unesco pamphlet on the teaching of foreign languages has this to say on the subject: "No language can be successfully used as a medium unless the student has previously acquired an active working command of the essential nucleus of the language, consisting as a rule of about 1000 words, the main grammatical forms and the most necessary idioms; a semi-active, semi-passive command of an additional vocabulary; and a technique of expansion through a dictionary using a controlled defining vocabulary." Though the student should have an active working command of the essential nucleus of the language, which consists of about 1000 words, this

will not be adequate for the purpose. He should have a semi-active, I would say active, command of an additional vocabulary of about 2500 words. We will discuss these requirements in detail at a later stage.

IV

THE PROBLEMS OF A TRANSFER TO THE ENGLISH MEDIUM IN COLLEGES

THE MAIN problem in the sphere of higher education in India to-day is that of a transfer to the English medium in the Pre-university year. The change is as sudden as it is drastic. And our matriculates are not well-equipped for this change. The result is a deterioration in the quality of higher education itself. If the scripts submitted for university examinations at various levels are read, it will be realised how grave the situation is. Judging from the percentage of results, examiners seem to have developed the tacit convention that what matters is substance, not form. If the candidate has presented correct information or the right point of view, it does not seem to matter if he has done this in incorrect English. He should be entitled to his class all the same. A dichotomy of this kind, except for professions depending on manual or mechanical skill, can only have a disastrous effect on higher education. As office assistant, officer, teacher or legal practitioner, a person has to know his subject well and also express his knowledge of it in correct language, spoken or written, whether the language is English or a regional tongue. Merely acquisition of knowledge is only half the achievement in which the learning process is expected to culminate.

One of the solutions to this problem is that of streamlining students into different divisions according to their ability in English. There should be a terminal and a preparatory course in English, the preparatory one being a more advanced course, with a more rigid insistence on correctness of expression. Only those students who are well up in English should be permitted to study for the preparatory course in their S.S.I.C. classes. If

others wish to take up the preparatory course, they should be able to face successfully the tests relating to this procedure. Otherwise they should be diverted to the terminal course and then to any of the professional diploma courses after they have done the terminal course.

But there is a considerable body of opinion in the country which is opposed to such a procedure. It is held that such a step may result in unfair discrimination especially against students from rural schools who have neither good teachers nor the proper environment for learning English well. Compelling them to take the less advanced course in English may actually mean prejudging the issue or denying them prematurely all opportunities of higher education.

Another solution is to make the Pre-university Examination a stiff one, especially with regard to English and make sure that a student passes the examination and joins a university only if he has developed his ability in English up to the required standard, both as regards comprehension and expression. There will be only one course in English for all. But the question paper can be so set that it tests candidates at two levels. The student who scores 35% or 40% marks will be well up in comprehension and some ability in expression. But he should be able to answer the other questions in the test paper only if he is considerably advanced both in comprehension and expression and scores 60% marks. 40% and 60% marks will not then indicate merely a pass class and first class performance in attempting *the same kind of questions*. Apart from the questions which lead easily to a score of 40% marks, the other questions in the test paper will be on a higher level altogether, though based on the same course. They can only be attempted by the better student. It is possible to construct a test paper of this kind. The pass student can then be diverted to the professional diploma courses and the first class student can be declared eligible for admission to a university.

But this is, after all, a measure devised for selection. A great deal has to be done for preparing the student, training him so that he can have a good chance to prove himself. We can think, in this context, of work being done elsewhere in this direction. A survey of research and experimental projects in the Commonwealth speaks of a centre, newly established in Hong Kong, where English is generally taught from the third year of Primary School for 6 to 8 periods a week. "A centre has been established for special classes of selected students who have completed the Chinese Middle School Course and who wish to improve their English in order to enter the university, teacher-training colleges, etc. The centre provides intensive training in English with emphasis on oral work over a two-year period, and has proved very successful. Experiments have been directed towards remedial work and the frequent use of audio-visual aids."

Similarly, in the American university that functions in Lebanon, we learn that the first year is devoted entirely to the teaching of English. The student is trained during this year to comprehend books on his subjects in English, listen with ease to lectures in English and to express himself correctly in English both in writing and in speech. It is only after he completes this year of training in English that he begins to study for the course that he has selected.

This is interesting. It is possible that, due to several handicaps, none of the three patterns of secondary school English, mentioned in the preceding chapter, may succeed in training students in English up to the level required at the universities. One of these handicaps is the dearth of teachers trained in modern techniques. It therefore seems worthwhile devoting the Pre-university year exclusively to the teaching of English. We can then expect the quality of our higher education to improve in great measure. The fact is that English cannot be taught like any other 'subject'. The student has to develop several language skills in what is a foreign language to him and not merely learn by

rote one or two textbooks. This means practice and plenty of correction work in small tutorial classes. The tragedy of our Pre-university teaching of English is that it assumes such a development of language skills on the part of the student and proceeds to introduce him to prose and poetry selections and abridged or unabridged novels. The thing to do is to give him more and more practice and train him in these skills. This cannot be done during a few periods a week for about eight months, especially when these periods have to be devoted to the study of set books. So long as English remains the medium of instruction and examination in our universities, it would be wise to devote the whole of the Pre-university year to the teaching of English, Reasoning and Reference Skills and equip the student for his career in the universities. In fact, the Secondary Education Commission has suggested that, in planning courses for the Higher Secondary year, special emphasis should be placed on training students in methods of study at College and on the study of English so long as it continues to be the medium of instruction in Universities. At least half the time, if not the entire year's work, should be devoted to English, Reasoning and Reference Skills.

To have English as medium at the primary and secondary stages means that we wish to train the child in English ways of thinking. In other words, we shall westernise and anglicise the child. The mother-tongue or the regional language has to be used as the medium of instruction as long as we can possibly do so. The transfer to English as a medium at the university stage requires a two-fold preparation. One has already been discussed, — the greater prominence which needs to be given to English in the Pre-university Course. Another is the *staggering* of the transfer, - a gradual replacement of the regional medium so as to smoothen the way for the transfer.

How is this to be done? The practice which is now in vogue, — that of using English as the exclusive medium for *all* subjects from the Pre-university year

onwards — is the least advantageous of all. It creates a gulf between schools and colleges which is almost unbridgeable. The new medium can be tempered to the shorn lamb by continuing the regional language as medium for other than language subjects, if any, during the Pre-university or Higher Secondary year and making an occasional or incidental use of English as medium there. The use of English as medium can, thereafter, be progressively increased. If the Pre-university pattern continues to be what it is, we can start using English during the Pre-university year as the sole medium for a new subject each term. We can thus make a beginning with Social Studies during the first term. The physical sciences present a peculiar problem in this connection. The transfer, with reference to these subjects to English as medium, can either be at the earliest or at the last stage. Since these are difficult subjects, one can argue either for an early or for a late transfer with equal force. On the whole, it would seem that the transfer should start with easy, practical subjects like physical education and be extended gradually to more difficult subjects.

It would also seem necessary, before such a transfer takes place, that the work done on each subject at school through the regional language should be summed up in English by the teacher during the first few periods. This helps the student to be familiar with the new medium which will later be used for an extension of his knowledge of the subject.

Some educationists advocate the use of a dual medium for the same subject or subjects for a short time during the Pre-university year. This will not be time ill spent for it obviates the need for a great deal of revision at a later stage.

There is also the suggestion that nearly half the time should be used, after the transfer to a new medium, to cumulative revision in a mixed dialect. But the use of a mixed dialect in the classroom might promote in pupils habits which are undesirable and which it would be difficult to eliminate at a later stage. Recapitulation

in English of materials learnt earlier is a safer and more useful procedure.

There are other difficulties involved in the transfer to a new medium which do not seem to have received any consideration so far. In the first place, it means a compromise in each subject curriculum for, obviously, the same volume of content cannot be passed on to the student through an unfamiliar medium, as through the regional language. This difficulty may decrease progressively, as the student becomes more and more familiar with English as his medium of instruction. But the content of the curriculum in each subject should be planned with this handicap in view. The Pre-university syllabus may have to be simplified considerably from this point of view. But provision will have to be made at least in the Degree Course for teaching each subject to the required standard.

There is also the possibility that the immature teacher, who is not an unusual phenomenon in our schools and colleges and whose knowledge of his subject is mostly confined to textbooks, will use bookish English while teaching the subject. It is necessary to have Pre-university classes taught by senior and experienced teachers of each subject.

Again, with the transfer to another medium, there is the danger of the medium of instruction over-shadowing the content of a course, making the education of students excessively linguistic. The linguistically able pupil may have advantages which he does not deserve and the pupil who has real ability in subjects like Mathematics and Physics may suffer because he is weak in English and cannot use English effectively as the medium of examination.

The only way to remedy this situation is to group pupils according to their ability in each subject, not general ability, which is bound to be linguistic. The less able language pupils can then be attended to separately and remedial work may be done with them in English. Streaming according to subject ability will not also provoke objections which are raised against

'streaming' on psychological grounds.

The tempo of the work done in each subject in the class can also be increased by supplementing the written or spoken word, which is an unfamiliar medium to the student, by charts or other visual aids. The teacher should use only a limited vocabulary in the class and present it in as many different contexts as possible. He should try with another set of vocabulary and structure if one set fails in the class. If the explanatory mode of discourse fails to drive home a point in the class, he can use the narrative or the interrogative mode.

We have also overlooked the fact that the Pre-university or Higher Secondary Teacher has to grapple with a difficult educational problem and that he needs special training if he is to succeed in his task. He needs instruction in theoretical problems of bilingual situations and opportunities to practise the bilingual method. He should undergo a course in the regional language and be familiar with the methods of teaching through both the languages. He has to grasp the difference between teaching the same subject through one language and another and use this knowledge of his in laying down syllabuses and selecting text materials. All that we do now is to appoint M.A.s as lecturers who know English literature rather than the English language, and their own subject rather than its proper presentation in English and place Pre-university students at their mercy.

Another step necessary for overcoming these difficulties is to produce textbooks in all subjects in *simple* and controlled English. The textbooks prescribed by some of the universities today in subjects like Physics and Geography are books written for pupils of the same age in 'resource countries' like Great Britain and are couched in a range of vocabulary and structure which is far wider than the one to which the Indian pupil is accustomed. The result is that they are almost incomprehensible to him. We have also to recognise the fact that English, as a world language, has developed several styles and registers and we have to decide,

in teaching English to our pupils, which kind of English they need for their purpose. Students of science, engineering and medicine, for example, do not need the same kind of English as arts students do. They can study with advantage classics in English on their own subject. This will help them to understand their subject better. It will also be useful if they are taught English by scientists and technologists *skilled in English*, along with their own lecturers in English.

It should be clear from what has been said above that the retention of English as a medium of university instruction does not end the problem which faces Indian educationists today. It is no use growing jubilant over it, regarding it as a victory over the regionalist. Complacency of this kind is as harmful to Indian education as the impatience of the regionalist. The retention of English as medium, in the context in which it is achieved, opens up other problems which have to be solved with great care and immediacy.

V

THE STUDY OF ENGLISH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

A REFERENCE was made in the last chapter to the study of English as a world language. In 1582 Richard Mulcaster, headmaster of the school in which Spenser, the great English poet, was educated, wrote: "The English tongue is of small reach, stretching no further than this island of ours, nay, not there over all." But New England had been colonised within forty years after that statement was made. Then began a period of commercial and imperial expansion which took the British people to all parts of the world and the English language with them. An idea of the extent of this diffusion can be gained from the following figures reproduced here from *The Story of Language* by Mario Pei, Columbia University. The figures refer to the number of people speaking the language mentioned against them.

- Chinese (*all dialects*): 450 million
- English: 250 million
- Hindi-Urdu: 160 million
- Russian: 140 million
- Spanish: 110 million
- German: 100 million
- Japanese: 80 million
- French: 75 million
- Malay: 60 million
- Bengali: 60 million
- Portuguese: 55 million
- Italian: 55 million
- Arabic: 50 million

Chinese tops the list because it is spoken by the

largest number of people. But it is obvious that English has the almost supreme advantage of numbers as well as power of expression. It is the language of a universal culture which embraces so many different departments of knowledge. It is the medium of expression for a transcendental epic like Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* as it is for the latest treatise on logical positivism or nuclear physics. Not only has the English language evolved a powerful standard of its own, both written and spoken, in its own mother island; new standards of English have arisen in different parts of the world, — in the United States, Australia and in various parts of the Commonwealth. English has thus been "nationalised, localised and democratised" abroad. It has also been democratised at home, for local accents have begun to be heard on the B.B.C. Special forms of the English language are also arising, — the English of engineering, of medicine and of aeronautics, for example. Many of the languages listed above have, at the most, evolved a written and spoken standard of their own, or are in the process of evolving it. But a few, like English and French, have, because of circumstance, political power and precedence in the tradition of modern culture, evolved, not one standard but a variety of standards, all of them equally living and valid, in their written and spoken form. They have given rise to a number of styles and registers, as numerous as the departments of thought into which the human genius for creative perception, discovery and invention has poured itself in modern times. They have become second languages, veritable 'classical' sources of light and knowledge for large sections of the world's population. This is what we mean when we speak of English as a world language.

Hence the study of English requires the services of all the working groups of scholars in the U.K. the U.S.A. and many other countries. English has developed a number of specialised forms, — restricted languages relevant to the sciences and technology. These are far more relevant to vocational use than invented forms like Basic English which contain a few general

words. After attaining a grounding in essential English, a student of English as a second language has to be directed to the restricted form of English which is relevant to his own field of learning. A theoretical framework has to be evolved for the study of English as a world language. The restricted forms of English have to be studied with a view to evolving easy techniques of teaching them to students and thus saving a good part of their time and energy. This is what our teachers of English, both in our schools and universities, have to cope with today. Excepting the chosen few who can contribute creatively or critically to the study of English literature, the large majority of them will find problems beckoning to them and challenging them in this field of investigation. Any attempt to solve these problems will bring to them the same sort of satisfaction and delight as the literary scholar experiences when he offers a new interpretation of an outstanding and much-discussed work of art. They will also have the pleasure of having rendered some national service at a moment of crisis in our higher education.

High roads have been constructed for the study of English literature. Books about books about books have multiplied and are multiplying so fast that no scholar can hope to read all that has been written about his own scanty plot of ground in literary study. What the Indian teacher of English needs today is not an easy trafficking with these books, but a second knowledge of General Linguistics which will enable him to analyse precisely a prescribed literary text. He will have to formulate for himself the relation between language and literature in a field in which it is not clearly established as yet, — contemporary English. He has to study his own local variety of English, — the Indian written standard. He has to secure a stable basis for teaching and maintaining a reasonable spoken standard through a study of the phonetics of English.

A great deal of activity on these lines is afoot in all parts of the English-speaking world. The Ford Foundation and the Centre for Applied Linguistics,

established in Washington (D.C.) U.S.A., conducted recently a survey of the need in various countries for a language of wider communication. The 'resource countries', — the U.K., the U.S.A. and France — are trying their best to meet the specialised needs of the 'consumer countries' in the field of second language teaching, — in teacher-training, textbook writing, the development of procedures in methodics, etc. A Commonwealth English Language Information Centre has been set up in London to collect and disseminate information about the various aspects of English as a second language. For this purpose, it maintains contacts with government departments of education, universities, other research institutions and experimental departments, training colleges and British Council Offices all over the Commonwealth. The Kenya Ministry of Education has set up a Special Centre for promoting the study of English as a first or second language. Makerere College, Uganda, has set apart some fellowships for research work in this field. The National Teacher Training Council established by the Government of Ghana, West Africa, is also tackling similar problems. The National School Broadcasting Unit in Nigeria is designing programmes to raise the standard of English teaching. The Government of Pakistan has appointed a science linguistics officer to tackle the problem of training scientists to understand and to use the English necessary for their professional purposes. An English Language Institute has been established in New Zealand to train teachers in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

The universities in the 'resource' countries are concentrating increasingly on this aspect of language study. London, Edinburgh and Leeds have organised regular courses of study for this purpose. The University of Sydney in Australia conducts a course for training teachers of English as a second language and several trainees from Asian countries take the course there. A similar programme has been organised in about fifty universities in the U.S.A., including Michigan,

Columbia, California, Texas and Louisiana. About two hundred Americans are engaged in teaching programmes overseas in the Phillipines, Indonesia, Turkey, Afghanistan and other countries.

A great deal of work is also being done on the subject in the universities in Holland and the Scandinavian countries. Educationists in Russia have produced their own textbooks for teaching English as a second language to Russian students.

Considerable research is going on in the universities in the 'resource' countries on this subject. A series of contrastive structure analyses have been undertaken by research students in order to spot out the areas of difficulty that the speaker of a certain language has to face while studying English as a second language. Tests have been constructed for assessing proficiency in written and spoken English by the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, and other organisations in the United States. A number of books have been published on the methodology of teaching English as a second language. Many of these have been listed in *An Interim Bibliography on the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages* published by the Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, (D.C.) U.S.A. A series of five films on language teaching have also been prepared under the auspices of the Modern Language Association.

The scope for research on the teaching of English as a second language is vast. The Report of the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language held in Makerere College, Uganda in January 1961 gives a list of topics which are waiting for research or investigation. As the Report itself says, some of these topics would be appropriate to University institutions, some to training colleges, and some to experimental and special centres. A detailed list of topics will be found in the Report. What interests us here is the theoretical framework into which these topics are fitted. It gives an idea of the many-sided investigation

necessary for the teaching of English as a second language.

The areas of English studies make it necessary to draw on several disciplines. A knowledge of General Linguistics is essential for describing the nature of the second language that is to be taught, especially the language in its contemporary form and the varieties of restricted language that it contains. Teaching materials have to be prepared and tests and exercises designed on this basis. Further research in languages other than English is necessary in order to provide the material for comparison with English. The teacher has also to be well-grounded in the theory of meaning and of translation. The nature of translation depends on the purpose which animates it and the direction in which it is planned. What is the medium from or into which the translation is to take place, — spoken English or written English? What is the level aimed at in the translation, — phonological, grammatical or lexical?

Some of the problems facing the non-English student of English literature are also linguistic problems. His appreciation of literature depends on his knowledge of English phonology (stress and intonation) and on his recognition of styles and registers, of cliches, idioms and fixed phrases and allusive references.

The fact that the University of Leeds has appointed a Professor of Contemporary English Usage is indicative of this new trend. Scholars are at work already on some projects in this field. Professor Quirk's projected *Survey of Contemporary English* will provide source-material for a statistical study of English grammar. Professor J. Noonan's projected study of the international language of the air will describe a particular 'register' or restricted language. The Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, has also produced a study in the general vocabulary of the physical and social sciences, the vocabulary essential for Indian students for comprehending the textbooks on these subjects.

This takes us to the next area of study, — Applied

Linguistics. The inquiries relevant to this field are: what are the methods of a comparative and contrastive analysis of English *vis à vis* other languages? How can errors from examination answers at all stages be used to assist bilingual comparison? How far can such an analysis be part of classroom teaching? What is the inter-relation of different types of grading, — lexical, grammatical and phonological? What should be the principles of selection of linguistic material at the early primary stage? How far can linguistic and psychological principles be reconciled if reading material in English is to be graded on the basis of cultural content? How can scientific and technological textbooks be graded on content-level and language-level?

A third area of study concerns itself with social and psychological problems. What is the motivation for second language learning? How do we determine the aptitude for it? What is the proper age for it? What is the effect of orthography in the teaching of second language phonology? What are the psychological effects of a second language medium? What are the advantages and disadvantages of simultaneous and sequential bilingualism in the educational process? What is the influence of the English medium on the failure rate of students in subjects other than English? What subjects should be taught through English and what through the regional language? What is the suitability of selected reading material in terms of its relationship to the local culture? What aspects of 'learning to read' in the first language are applicable to the second? What should be the timing of the auditory and visual items in combined audio-visual aids?

Another area of study is the methodics of language teaching. On what basis are the sounds, words and structures to be taught *limited*, — i.e. restricted and selected in order to facilitate teaching? How are they to be arranged, i.e., *staged* and *graded*? How are they to be *presented* with a view to *establishing* them in the pupil's mind? Should this be done through the oral method or the grammar and translation method? What

are the test procedures for assessing achievement in language skills? How is the bilingual background of a given individual to be measured? How to ascertain the variation in the facility with which different types of items are learned? How are written tests of audio-lingual skills to be devised? How are aptitude and diagnostic tests to be constructed? How are objective tests to be utilised for measuring the attainment of language skills?

A few other questions also crop up under this head. How is the curriculum to be adapted to meet the demands of a bilingual situation? What are the methods to be employed for teaching students who are transferred from regional language to English-medium instruction? How is the introduction and consolidation of writing skills to be effected? How is spelling to be taught when English is taught as a second language?

These four procedures, — limitation, arrangement, presentation and testing — have to be applied to all language materials and at four levels, — orthographic, phonological, grammatical and lexical.

Organisation of language teaching is a fifth area of study. Should separate teachers or the same teachers be used for teaching more than one language? Should a teacher be used for teaching English only or other subjects also? What conventions should be adopted for illustrating language textbooks? What should be the optimum size of classes for different aspects of language-teaching? What is the effectiveness of different types of group-work in classes? What is the role of film and television in teacher-training? What is the role of audio-visual techniques when considered as emergency substitutes for teachers, as examples to teachers or as supplementation to teaching? How can a central 'bank' of test items be established and made available to examination and testing authorities?

Even a mere listing of details under these five heads will serve to show that linguistics and methodics have arrived at so many new findings during the last two or three decades that the pedagogy of English remains

immune from their impact only at its own peril. Further, the application of these findings is not restricted to the teaching of English at the secondary stage. Many of them are applicable to the Pre-university and the university stages as well. It is against this background that we have to understand the new movement in this field in India, —the establishment of the English Language Teaching Institute in Allahabad and the Central Institute of English in Hyderabad, the Snowball Campaign conducted by the Education Ministry of Madras, the training courses being organised for Pre-university lecturers in English by universities and other similar developments. West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar are thinking of organising their own Institutes for training secondary teachers of English. It seems likely that this will be the pattern for each one of the States in India in the near future.

It is this background which makes co-operation from 'resource' countries so welcome in this field. Apart from providing us with a large number of mother-tongue speakers of the second language which we have adopted for cultural purposes, these aid programmes help to acquaint our teachers of English with the new developments in linguistics and in the study of English as a world language. The four offices of the British Council in Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras have organised a number of short courses for teachers of English in their area for this purpose. This has helped considerably in promoting a new awareness among Indian teachers of English. The Madras Snowball Campaign, which the Madras Government have organised for the reorientation of teachers of English in primary schools in their thousands, derives a good part of its stimulus and methodology from the experts whose services have been lent to the Campaign by the British Council. Its officers have done commendable work in disseminating a knowledge of new techniques among teachers and in helping State Departments of Education and universities to reorganise their courses in English. *English Language Teaching*, the quarterly magazine

which Messrs. Orient Longmans publish for the British Council, is devoted exclusively to a consideration of English teaching problems particularly in their Indian context. The Central Institute of English, Hyderabad and the English Language Teaching Institute, Allahabad have been able to produce considerable work by way of text materials, audio-visual aids and research at all levels of English teaching because of the distinguished core of experts whose services have been lent to these institutions by the British Council.

The British Council has also devised a scheme for visiting professors of English from the U.K. to Indian Universities. Indian lecturers in English are also granted scholarships to study the teaching of English as a second language in London or Leeds. But British Council help is not confined only to language teaching. Distinguished professors of English from the U.K. are invited by the Council to hold seminars on English literature for Indian lecturers in English once a year. The University of Leeds offers a course in Indo-English literature and Indian professors of English are invited occasionally to deliver a course of lectures on the subject.

The United States, with their greater resources, have made a significant impact on developments in this field in Indian education as in many others. A good many of our universities now offer a programme in American literature at the post-graduate level and these programmes are supported by munificent library grants and by the deputation of visiting American professors of American literature. This has resulted in a great deal of stimulus to literary studies, apart from the mutual goodwill which it definitely promotes. A number of Indian professors of English, along with professors of other subjects, are invited as visiting professors to American universities. Lecturers in English are awarded scholarships for post-graduate courses in English language teaching or in American literature. An outstanding development in this field is the Ford Foundation grant for five years to the Government of

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India for establishing the Central Institute of English. This is expected to give a new perspective to the teaching of English in India. The United States Educational Foundation has prepared a scheme under which it will be possible to depute annually to India a group of young American graduates who will be attached as tutors in English to colleges in India. The first group of students has already arrived. They will do tutorial and composition correction work and help the English departments which are understaffed, as are most departments in many of our colleges.

The study of English as a world language is the new foundation on which we shall have to raise the edifice of English studies in India. While we have to be aware of its importance as a world language, we should also remember that we have now to study it as a second language, noting all the handicaps that such a study implies. We have to be grateful for all the expert guidance that is made available to us in this field.

VI

ENGLISH IN INDIA: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

WE HAVE discussed some of the basic problems relating to the use of English in India in the preceding chapters. We have also formed an idea of the importance of English as a world language. It may now be desirable to sum up the aims and objectives sustaining our study of English in India in the national context.

Why do we wish to continue with the study of English in India while seeking to revise our aims and methods? It seems to me that we are prompted by any or all of the following reasons when we do this:

(1) English will continue to be the language of all important trade and industry in the country for many years to come. It will take many years before it ceases to be the language of administration at higher levels. A substitute has yet to be found for English as the language of competitive examinations. The physical set-up of offices has to change. There are compelling economic reasons why it cannot be changed so quickly.

(2) A knowledge of English is imperative for getting access to modern scientific and technological knowledge. Even universities that have regionalised the medium will think twice before extending this step to courses in Law, Medicine, Engineering or Agriculture. Such a step will put the cart before the horse, the medium before the content of a subject. Even for subjects for which the medium has been regionalised, students have to supplement their knowledge by reading books and journals in English, if their degree has to have any value.

(3) So long as creative thought in every department of knowledge is not as active in this country as in the

West, it would be rash to cut ourselves off from a language which keeps us in continuous contact with the latest thought in Europe in every field of life and culture. So long as we have not over-taken the West in its intellectual leadership of the world or even matched it on its own ground, rejecting the study of English as a second language will amount to committing intellectual *hara-kiri*.

(4) A knowledge of English is necessary today if only for discarding English at a later stage. Translations alone can enrich the literatures in our languages in every way. It is possible to find in English translations of outstanding works relating to any field and written originally in any language of the world. English literature itself is rich in such writings. These can be translated into our languages only by persons who know English well and the subject which is their field of study. That is why English as a second language has to be studied by all students, not merely by those who wish to specialise in English. What English did for our literature of power in the past, it has yet to do for our literature of knowledge.

(5) There is the need to interpret India's thought and culture abroad. Our diplomats are learning many languages today, from Arabic to Russian. Even so, international committees and conferences transact their business in English and French. A book translated into English or French stands the chance of winning a world public. Our budding diplomats, thinkers and interpreters in the international field have to study the compulsory as well as optional courses in English. They have to express themselves with elegance and grace in written and spoken English, not merely with formal correctness. It may do equally well if they know French in this way. But the language may as well be English, considering the money, energy and time that we have spent as a nation on teaching and learning it.

I have stated these five reasons in their ascending order of durability. The reason given last states the longest need for English, at least for our top-ranking

men in every field. The third and fourth reasons alone emphasise our need to study English as a second language for many years to come.

In spite of all the measures being taken now to reform the teaching of English at the secondary level, we have to reckon with the fact that provision will have to be made for emphasising language study in university courses in Compulsory English. This is because English is no longer the medium at the high school stage. The only English that the student learns at school is what he is taught in the English classroom. We cannot lecture away, any longer, on the beauties of English novels, poems or plays in the Compulsory English class. This may be regarded as an unfortunate trend, for we may feel that students will now be deprived of the liberalising influence of English literature. But we shall do well to remember three or four facts in this connection:

- (1) Language teaching is not such an unpleasant task as it is imagined to be. With proper training and equipment, it can even be delightful. (2) There are great regional literatures growing up all around us and these can shape young minds effectively. It is only fair that these should have a place in the compulsory courses in our schools and colleges. They owe their revitalisation to English literature and have grown up in the same great tradition. (3) The courses in special and optional English, — especially the latter — are planned for students who specialise in English literature. A continuity in literary study will therefore be maintained in these courses. (4) Excellent specimens of modern English prose and verse can be prescribed even for our compulsory courses in English. These will have to be studied, not from the point of view of pseudocritical or critical inquiry but of imaginative and logical comprehension, of textual analysis.

We are thinking of this shift in emphasis from litera-

ture to language today for an important reason. There is a dilemma in the teaching of English at all levels because of the changed context in which it is taught and the partial reform that we have implemented with regard to the medium of instruction — the replacement of English at the secondary level by the regional language and the continuation of English as medium at the university level without providing, at the same time, for a more intensive study of English at the secondary level. This has brought about a crisis in our system of higher education. It stares us in the face at every corner, in every school and college.

There are two extreme views advocated with regard to this problem. One is to eliminate the teaching of English altogether and wipe out a disgraceful past. There is bitter controversy about the status of English as an official language and as medium of instruction in the universities. But I do not think that the need to teach English as a second language is challenged by any considerable number of people today. The dislike for English simply because it is a foreign language is the product of narrow horizons and unsteady minds.

The other view, in its extreme form, even objects to English being called a foreign language. It looks back with wistful longing to the days when English was all in all, unofficial and official, the language of fashion and of administration, of business and instruction, of industry and culture. The view is redolent of the memories of convent schools and convent accents, of homes in which English supplanted the mother-tongue. The persons who hold this view advocate the restoration of English as the medium of instruction in high schools. A former generation of children knew more English than children do to-day, but for abnormal reasons. English was, then, the medium of instruction even in high schools. Modern Indian languages had no collegiate status. English had taken their place and it did duty both for itself and them. That was why the teaching of English had such a disproportionate literary bias then. These persons desire the restoration

of that artificially reared standard of English in India, considering it normal. But to concede this would be the most desperate phase of abnormality. The country is settling down to its normal cultural life after a long period of servitude. It would be tragic if we ignored this normalcy and proceeded with our old aims, curricula and methods as if our needs were the same as before.

English will continue as a higher medium of instruction so long as the modern Indian languages are not well equipped to replace it. The teaching of English in our schools and colleges during this period of transition will have to emphasise expression as much as comprehension. The university student has, during this period, to spend as much time on trying to write correct English as on understanding the books in English on his subject. If the medium is regionalised and if Hindi becomes the sole official language, he will still have to study English as a compulsory second language, if not for purposes of expression, at least for the sake of comprehension. This is the only way in which we can keep in touch with world thought on any subject.

But the writing of English not only with correctness but with elegance and grace will always engage the élite in India. The motivation for this effort is stated earlier under the last of the five objectives. Sri Aurobindo even speaks of a future for Indo English poetry. If our aim is not success and personal fame but to arrive at the expression of spiritual truth and experience of all kinds in poetry, the English tongue is the most widespread and is capable of profound turns of mystic expression which make it admirably fitted for the purpose if it could be used for the highest spiritual expression, that is worth trying.¹ He even remarks that an Indo English writer may have his full chance "At present many are turning to India for its sources of spirituality, but the eye has been

¹ p. 248 *Letters of Sri Aurobindo, Third Series*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS

THE teaching of English in our schools is in a chaotic state today. With the great expansion in education that has come in the wake of Independence, it has become extremely difficult to find trained and qualified teachers for any subject, especially English. The foundational years for the teaching of English in schools are in the hands of teachers who neither know enough English nor are familiar with the latest and far-reaching developments in the pedagogy of English. Pupils are taught English for about six periods a week for six years. But it has been estimated that they hardly know 1500 words by the time they join a university. This means that they have hardly been able to learn English words at the rate of one word per period. They do not know how to use the commonest structures of English.

The situation may be different in a few English medium schools. But it can hardly be different in schools with English medium classes attached to them, classes to which guardians increasingly send their wards in big cities in the hope that they may have an adequate knowledge of English by the time they join a university. The performance of pupils is, as a rule, deplorable in their mother-tongue as well as in English. Untrained teachers are not competent to deal with this situation. Teachers who are trained are also generally unable to cope with it because of the doubtful utility of the training they receive in our training colleges. What is needed is something like a revolution in the methodology of English taught in our training colleges.

The experienced teacher looks fondly back to the

days when English was taught through the 'grammar and translation' method and attributes the deterioration in current standards to the 'direct' or oral method. He is partly justified in this criticism for the oral method, in the hands of teachers who have no proficiency in oral English, is bound to create more confusion than understanding. But he forgets the fact that the 'grammar and translation' method succeeded well because English was the medium of instruction in high schools and pupils got plenty of writing practice in English during *all* their periods at school. They read textbooks in English on all their subjects. It was this practice which stood them in good stead.

This is not to say that the grammar and translation method is absolutely to be condemned. Mr. Ronald Mackin quotes with approval what the authors of *The Teaching of Modern Languages* (London, 1956) say about this situation in his paper on "The Teaching of English in Difficult Circumstances". "In the teaching of Modern Languages, perhaps more than in any other teaching, we find completely opposed methods of instruction working with success. There is the grammar-grinder of the old school, who despises Phonetics, gramophone and oral work, rejects all the more recent findings of teaching methods, treats his language as though it were dead, — yet fills his pupils with an enthusiasm for language and culture that many others, playing records, dramatics, correspondence and epidiascope, can but partially attain. Some men can succeed in their highly personal approach, however odd and unworkable this may appear to others."

But such wizards belong to a generation that is fast disappearing in our country, along with the circumstances that were specially favourable to their wizardry. If the 'grammar and translation' method continues to be the basis of teaching in some schools even now, for lack of teachers trained in the new methods, here is a summary of the suggestions by Mr. Mackin to make their teaching reasonably effective in very large classes:

- (i) The love of competition should be exploited . . . by

encouraging healthy rivalry between teams.... Naturally, the teams should be fairly evenly matched. Scores of the teams in any particular competition (e.g. vocabulary, meaning of idiomatic expressions, etc.) should be marked on the board. A good way of forming teams is to use the existing distribution of desks taken either across or down the classroom. Whole teams can be promoted or demoted according to the results of a competition It is hardly necessary to add that movements of this kind are only advisable where the teacher has a good control of the class.

(ii) "As far as possible each question should be addressed to the whole class. The teacher should decide which pupil should be asked to answer it after he has had a chance to see the reactions of the class as a whole to the question. The greatest mistake of all in classes of this size is to ask questions 'round the class', since pupils tend to let their attention wander when they know they are safe for a time from questioning."

(iii) The class should be taught to sing songs in the foreign language from time to time. "The class should be broken up into groups of about 15 for this and similar chorus work and should be taught the virtues of clear diction combined with low volume.... It soon becomes possible to have different songs sung by the various groups on different occasions." If it is not possible to train them to sing songs, they can be made to recite simple lyrics.

(iv) A great deal of writing should be exacted from the pupils. If correction work becomes burdensome to the teacher in a large class, "one obvious method is to get the pupils to correct each other's work whenever possible. The natural tendency of the pupils to be 'generous' towards each other in their marking can be counteracted by checking a certain proportion of the marking each time, and penalising both marker and markee for 'undetected' errors. The task of marking and correcting written work can also be made easier by setting strict limits on the amount to be written in free compositions . . . by choosing question formulas

that permit of a single unambiguous answer; by working over exercises orally in class before setting them as home work, by building up model answers on the blackboard through question and answer, and so on."

(v) If pupils still persist in making two or three mistakes on each line, he should select one particular kind of error in the work of each pupil, correct it, require him to write a number of sentences in a given pattern as a first step to drilling out the mistake and subsequently give extra penalties whenever the same pupil repeats this type of mistake'

(vi) With more advanced pupils, the teacher can employ another time saving device While correcting exercises, the teacher merely indicates mistakes, no matter what the type of mistake may be He keeps a note of say twenty typical errors which he considers to be of more importance than the others When he hands the work back, he invites individuals to pick out of their own work certain errors of which they think they know the correct version It is, of course, psychologically sound to give the person who has perpetrated an error the first opportunity of putting it right

Many State Departments of Education have adopted a structural syllabus now The grammar and translation method is not openly advocated by any departments or institutions It lingers here and there in the actual teaching work of teachers who are not convinced of the utility of the structural approach and who revert to their favourite method as soon as the inspector's back is turned to the class Even then one can say that the use of textbooks prepared on structural principles is bound to be beneficial Both the vocabulary and the sentence patterns are controlled and graded in these books and this makes it somewhat easy for the student to learn the language

But this is poor consolation It is necessary to have teachers trained in the new methods and techniques Direct association between the word and the thing meant gives better results than translation. Direct association of this kind can be promoted by means of

activity appropriate to what the pupil is learning, by setting up situations which 'simulate those of real life'.

The All India Seminar on the Teaching of English in Secondary Schools, held at Nagpur in December 1957, was the first move, on an all India basis, to adopt a structural syllabus for the teaching of English in secondary schools. Madras had accepted such a syllabus before that date. The Seminar recommended:

- "(i) that the primary aim of teaching English in secondary schools should be to enable pupils to learn as well as possible, to understand, speak, read and write the English language;
- (ii) that, within a period of six years of the high school course, the pupils should be enabled to attain a working knowledge of English, giving them mastery over about 250 basic structures and a vocabulary of 2500 essential words;
- (iii) that the course in English be organised in such a way that it be self-contained, bearing in mind the needs of those who will not pursue their studies beyond the high school level;
- (iv) that, while keeping these aims of teaching English as the chief objective throughout the secondary stage, an attempt should be made to initiate the pupils in literary appreciation or cultural enjoyment of the English language in the last two years of the high school (secondary) course. The material used should be adapted to the general character of the course and should be simple from the linguistic point of view."

Another point that the Seminar Report makes is worth remembering. Only teachers "trained in scientific methods of teaching English should be enlisted for teaching pupils from the earliest stage . . . the teacher can apply his own knowledge of the science of speech sounds to give accurate and thorough instruction in pronunciation." This is all the more necessary since, discarding the old translation and grammar method,

present syllabuses are based on the assumption that "language is primarily a spoken thing" and that, therefore, our approach to a 'foreign language should, in the first instance be through its spoken form'.

Structural syllabuses have now been introduced in many States for teaching English in secondary schools. These are based on the principle of vocabulary, selection and control as well as a presentation of the structure patterns which English employs in order to convey meaning, in a teaching order. What this teaching order should be is a question on which one cannot expect the same unanimity or near unanimity of views as on the desirability of adopting a structural syllabus. This calls for a great deal of experimentation in the field and the trying out of as many 'teaching orders' of structures and vocabulary items as experts can devise. It is quite possible that a few 'teaching orders' may prove to be equally successful and there will be no reason then to discard one in favour of the other. Intensive experimentation alone can enable us to pronounce on the suitability of various 'teaching orders'.

Another assumption of the structural syllabus is that 'mastery over the signalling system of a language is more important than detailed knowledge of the forms of the language. Learning the structures, pupils also learn 'functional grammar'. But the Nagpur Seminar Report concedes that 'formal grammar by the inductive method may be taught in the last three years in order to crystallize the pupil's knowledge of grammar' and that "the teaching of terminology should be based on the pupil's knowledge of the grammar of his mother tongue'. Just as the pupils are to be initiated into literary appreciation in the last two years of the high school course, they have to be enabled to consolidate their knowledge of English grammar during the last three years of the course. It is important to stress this because it is somehow generally assumed that the promoters of the structural syllabus completely discard translation and grammar.

Another question that needs elucidation is the extent

to which the mother-tongue should be used or avoided while teaching English according to the structural syllabus. For instance, one of the speakers at the Nagpur Seminar is reported to have said: "The mother-tongue should be only sparingly used for preparing the ground so that it did not impede the creation of an English atmosphere in the classroom." (A.I.S.N. Report: P.11). Similarly, under 'Teaching a Prose Lesson' (P. 31), while elucidating the various methods that can be used for explaining new words (through situations, by pictures, demonstration and activity methods, self-explanatory sentences and definition by giving the English substitute), the use of the mother-tongue is placed last, with a warning in italics: "By using the mother-tongue only *when unavoidable*". One can understand why the mother-tongue should be sparingly used in the classroom. Pupils are there to learn the new sentence-patterns of English and an injudicious use of the mother-tongue, which is bound to have different sentence-patterns, may confuse the pupil. But positive statements and italics can do harm in these matters in their own way. It is said that a teacher spent a whole period with his class explaining the word 'organisation' through situations and by all the other methods detailed above, except the use of the mother-tongue. The result was that when, at the end of the period, the pupils were asked what the word meant, it was clear that none of them had understood it. We cannot, after all, keep the mother-tongue out of the child, even if we try and keep it out of the classroom. It is there, waiting for him and waiting within him, at home, in the market and on the playground. If it can be used rightly for teaching English, so much the better. It is gratifying to note that the Nagpur Seminar accepted this point of view: "After some discussion about the advisability of using the child's mother-tongue, it was agreed that it might profitably be used for purposes of exposition and quick testing". (A.I.S.N. Report: p. 7).

It seems reasonable to assume that English should be taught for six periods (of 50 minutes each) a week

for six years, if the objectives of the courses are to be realised.

Adequate practice for a large class is possible only through chorus work. As Mr. Mackin remarks, it is possible to train large classes to talk softly. If this is difficult, a group should be engaged in chorus work while other silent groups are assigned some writing work to do. This may look like violating the principle that oral forms should be mastered before written forms are taught. But not much harm is done provided the teacher makes sure that nothing is written that has not been previously dealt with orally.

Mr. Mackin makes two other suggestions regarding the use of this activity method in large classes, which are equally valuable. One is that the teacher "should delay the setting of 'free compositions' until about the fourth year by which time the learners ought to have acquired a mastery of the main sentence patterns of the language, and hence be able to choose between alternative constructions. Up to this point accuracy and attention to detail in the preparatory exercises should be insisted on, and at all time the pupils should be trained to say or write only those things which they *know* to be right from previous experience, and to avoid those things about which they have doubts." Another is that the 'activity' type of method should not be objected to simply because a school does not have the necessary equipment. The teacher himself is still the best audio-visual aid, with the conventional blackboard and chalk. "One authority with only slight exaggeration has declared that he could teach all the essentials of English with only a box of matches."

Mr. Mackin's paper on "The Teaching of English in Difficult Circumstances" is of special relevance to the teaching of English in India. Circumstances are particularly difficult in India because the teachers have to face large classes and work in cramped conditions even when the number of pupils is not excessive. "The old-fashioned type of benches and desks which

restrict movement; the bad light; the noise from neighbouring classes which may be separated from them by nothing more than a bamboo screen; insufficient provision for their subject in the time-table; a lack of aids of all kinds; interference from parents or a dominating, conservative headmaster; and, finally, the requirements of an examination system which places a premium on the written language and consequently seems to favour the 'grammar-grinder' of the old school".

But Mr. Mackin sounds a note of hope and this is what we need today more than ever: "The problems set by large classes are not new. Nor have large classes always been considered undesirable. Comenius maintained that the ideal number in a class was hundred. This sounds odd until we realise that he too divided the language learning process into its receptive and productive aspects, splitting the class up into groups of ten which were then drilled by the best pupils (*decuriones*).... In very large classes is there not still something to be said for this system?¹ Naturally, great care will have to be taken particularly in selecting Monitors to conduct oral drills; but since in any case it is one of the weaknesses of classroom teaching that the learners hear each other more than they hear the teacher the use of Monitors could at least ensure that those pupils who would be heard most would be the best performers. Should we perhaps have another look at the work done by Bell in Madras more than 150 years ago?"

¹ The Lancastrian system of education, one of the main features of which is the use of Monitors. This grew out of the Monitorial system in India which was copied in England at the instance of Dr. Bell, the Presidency Chaplain in Madras.

VIII

THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

It is now generally accepted that we should begin to teach a foreign language through its spoken form. The sequence of skills would then be — understanding the spoken language; being able to speak it, learning to read it, and learning to write it. The structural approach to the teaching of English accepts this list of priorities and starts with the spoken form of English. But there are many spoken forms of English. Which spoken standard should we adopt in our schools for teaching English to our pupils?

It is difficult to answer this question satisfactorily. We have made our choice of the spoken standard from among the spoken standards that are current in the English speaking world. We adhere to the Received, and not the American, standard. An accident of history has determined our choice and we do not intend revising it. But have we received the Received standard? One has only to visit a few schools and colleges in each State in order to discover what is happening to Spoken English. But for a few schools in which the Received standard is carefully drilled home to children perhaps neglecting the teaching of other subjects somewhat in order to achieve this, the only standard that confronts us is the Regional Standard. Our pupils, and indeed many of their teachers, speak English as if it were Hindi, Bengali, Marathi or Tamil. Our regional speech habits have absorbed spoken English and regionalised it. Spoken English is no longer used outside the English classroom in our schools and even in many of our colleges. One is not very sure how far it is used even during the English periods in schools. Many teachers fall back slyly on the translation and grammar method while teaching English, either

because they are not convinced of the efficacy of the oral approach or are not equipped well enough to practise it. In colleges in which English is the medium of instruction, it has become increasingly difficult to hear grammatically correct English spoken, let alone the niceties of its spoken form.

The result is that intelligibility has begun to suffer even in our interprovincial contacts. The typical Tamilian and Assamese do not easily understand each other when they converse in English. We need not seek consolation in the fact that Hindi, which will soon be our *lingua franca*, will eliminate these handicaps. What we have done to English, we can also do to Hindi. Regional standards of spoken Hindi will grow up and make us unintelligible to each other. The point at issue is, not that the language concerned is Hindi or English, but that our methods of teaching a second language are faulty. We teach it as if it were a dead language. We teach it as if it would be adequate for a student to recognise a word in the language by its spelling.

But is comprehension our only aim in learning English as a second language? Should we not read the sentence that we comprehend? How shall we pronounce the word that we comprehend? Writing English may be a more and more dispensable skill for the majority of people in the country as years pass. Speaking English may not also be such an essential skill for all after some years. But even when we read a sentence, we have to pronounce it and stress it the right way. Moreover, we cannot dispense with speaking and writing English for many years to come without forgoing some of our opportunities in life.

I am, in fact, surprised that we have taught English all these years without making sure that students in our schools and colleges, who pass a written test in English, also take an oral test. It is fantastic that a living language which has to be used for several important purposes in its spoken form and, which we have agreed should be taught through the oral approach,

should be allowed to be spoken by thousands of students as if it were Bengali, Kannada or Gujarati. It is high time that we amended our ways in this regard.

But what standard of spoken English shall we encourage in our classrooms and in our oral tests? The one standard we have in view is the Received Standard. But is it an attainable ideal? Is it a consummation devoutly to be wished? I think not. It is possible that the children of a few aristocratic families have the opportunity to cultivate it in highly select primary schools or with Englishmen as their tutors. But such schools and tutorships are a drop in the ocean. If all the schools in the country are to be staffed by teachers who have been initiated into the Received Standard, our fourth Five Year Plan will have to be devoted exclusively to the achievement of this objective. Thousands of these teachers will have to be singled out in their tender years and subjected to rigorous training in the Received Standard at the hands, not of Welshmen, Irishmen or Scotsmen who speak English, but of Englishmen who have been educated in English public schools and on the banks of the Isis or the Cam. Further, they will have to be kept carefully segregated from the country's population and even from their own families, for their accent may be profaned and their intonation diluted by the intrusion of native speech-sounds. After some years of rigorous pupilage and seclusion, they will have to be marched into their jobs as teachers of English in primary or middle schools in different parts of the country and made to impart their mystic lore to the millions of children that come to the schools. Assuming that these children are able to resist their environment and to retain this gift of speaking English undefiled, they will take a decade or two to become effective teachers of spoken English to the next generation. And it is quite possible that, by the time, this is achieved, the Received Standard itself will have undergone a sea-change either intrinsically or Atlantically. Another Five Year Plan will then have to be devoted to rehabilitating the Altered, Received

Standard in India.

It may be thought that in-service or mid-service training of teachers will be helpful in this context. Such training will, no doubt, promote in them an awareness of the Received Standard and its subtleties of vowels and consonants and will be useful to that extent. It will give them the rare pleasure of listening to the Received Standard. But it is doubtful whether such training will change the speech-habits of teachers, unless they are faced with the prospect of losing their jobs if there is no metamorphosis of accent. A threat of this kind may even lead to simulation. Some of the pathetic persons I have known are Indian undergraduates in English universities who, distrusting their own speech-habits, opt for the Received Standard which trips affectedly on their tongues. They speak with muffled accents like the shadowy figures in the underworld of Virgil or Dante.

There is no hope, then, that the Received Standard will ever be well received in India. But what is the alternative? Shall we be content with our broad, home-spun English — a bewildering number of regional standards of spoken English which differ from State to State and which threaten to be mutually incomprehensible?

It would be interesting to see, in this connection, what the English-speaking situation is in some of the African countries. The Africans are a people much less linguistically conscious than ourselves. But they are multilingual as we are and their problems are, in many ways, similar to ours. Mr. Peter Strevens, in his *Spoken language* (Longmans Green & Co., 1956), gives us an illuminating account of English as spoken in Africa. He says that African pronunciation of English suffers in intelligibility for the following reasons: "In the first place it contains a smaller number of vowels and diphthongs than do other pronunciations.... Secondly, it does not make a distinction made in most other dialects of English, the distinction of vowel-length, by which the vowels in words like *heed*, *hard*,

pool, are longer than the vowels in *hid*, *had*, *pull*. Thirdly, all syllables tend to be given the same amount of energy, unlike other dialects of English, in which there is a great difference made between 'stressed' (strong) and 'unstressed' (weak) syllables. Finally, it does not contain a system of intonation, at any rate of the same kind as that found in almost every other dialect of English." (p. 30).

One can see that this description of African pronunciation corresponds closely to Indian pronunciation as well. If we observe the distinction of vowel length, we do not observe the shortness of vowels in some of our States, as when we turn *head-master* into *hed:master*. The African pronunciation suffers in intelligibility because a small number of sounds and features try to do the job of a large number: "The passage of time and the acquisition of fluency still do not make up for the absence of several vowels and diphthongs, one or two consonants, stress, and intonation. . . Tests with West African speakers and with speakers of Received Pronunciation suggested that whereas Received Pronunciation, when used between speakers of that dialect, was 95% efficient, West African pronunciation used between speakers of West African, on the same material, was only 30% efficient. The speakers of Received Pronunciation found that to them, the West African pronunciation was 28% efficient; while in the opposite direction, speakers of the West African pronunciation found Received Pronunciation about 64% efficient . . . under given circumstances the possibility of misunderstanding, or confusion, or ambiguity, or complete lack of comprehension, may be between ten and twenty times as great with the West African pronunciation as with Received Pronunciation." (pp. 33-34).

How to remedy this situation in Africa? Mr. Strevens points out that the emergence of an *educated* African pronunciation, one which is, as it were, in between the man's own original pronunciation and that of the Englishman — is a hopeful sign. He thinks that it will

inevitably lead to a realisation of the inadequacy of the average African pronunciation, and therefore to a gradual improvement. The Africans who acquire a high degree of education, either at home or abroad, end with a pronunciation different in some way from average African pronunciation. "A small number acquire a pronunciation of English indistinguishable from that of an Englishman". (p. 34). This would be a cultural distinction or an attainment that will have special value while competing for jobs which involve significant international contacts. Others, who do not end up with Received Pronunciation, "acquire a form of speech that quite definitely qualifies for inclusion in the list of 'educated' pronunciations". (p. 34). This shows how the average African pronunciation can be improved in respect of intelligibility and efficiency.

In what way does Educated African Pronunciation differ from the general African Pronunciation? Mr. Strevens observes: "It contains a large number of vowels, diphthongs and consonants, it contains a stress-system, and it contains a system of intonation. It corresponds exactly to Educated Canadian or Australian... in that it is clearly identified with an area of the world, Africa, but is completely intelligible to speakers of other educated dialects (i.e. R.P., American Standard, etc.). Finally, it is intelligible to speakers of the local dialects of English in Africa (i.e. those who use average African pronunciation)". (pp. 34-35.)

I now revert to the question of the spoken standard that has to be aimed at in our schools and colleges. What Mr. Strevens says about African needs in this context has a lesson for us also: "What about the question of choice of pronunciation? This, again, is something which is either generally ignored, or the assumption is made (I think wrongly) that the final aim should be Received Pronunciation. We should recall that we spoke earlier about the emergence of an 'Educated African' pronunciation. This should be the aim, I suggest, for those who in fact become members of the educated section of the community. In particular

it is the most suitable end-product for those who become members of the teaching profession or go on to university studies. At lower stages of education lower degrees of intelligibility must be accepted. My own suggestion would be to accept quite happily the average African pronunciation which exists in that area right up to the lower forms of the secondary school, *provided* that two additional features were taught and assimilated: distinctions of vowel length, and intonation." (pp. 81-82).

We in India have, like Browning's grammarian, aimed at a million and missed a unit, but without the earnestness and single-mindedness with which the grammarian pursued his ideal. We have been prodigal of aim and chary of achievement. A measurable aim is virtue, where low aim is crime and too high an aim even more criminal. It is time that we defined our aim and set out to achieve it. The late Mr. E. V. Gatenby observed in this connection: "There are many varieties of English, — Canadian, Welsh, Scotch, Australian, Irish, American, etc. — and any mutually intelligible form of educated English is universally acceptable. Indian English exists. It is as worthy of acceptance as any other brand of English, and the time has come for its establishment as a Regional Standard. Professor Fries has indicated by his phonetic system what the sounds and speech habits of educated Middle West American English in general use are, and similar work to discover what the 'received' standard in India is would be the first step to furnish Indian English with the authority it needs. Setting up such a regional standard would save a good deal of time in teaching and learning the language."

Here is a statement by an Englishman which should convince us if we have any doubts still lingering in our minds on this score. Mr. Gatenby means by 'Regional' the standard received in a certain geographical area and not the average standard of a region as contrasted with its educated standard. What he has in mind is the educated Indian standard. There is an educated Indian pronunciation of English. The best

speakers of English in each of our States use it. We have to tape-record and study the sounds and speech habits of educated Indians in every walk of life — of the best lawyers, judges, businessmen, political leaders and professors — in order to define the features of Educated Indian Pronunciation. This can be our working standard. It will then be the duty of our teachers of English to see that their pupils acquire it by the time they join a university or become members of the educated section of the community.

I think that a study on these lines will show that Educated Indian Pronunciation is free from provincialisms or the gravitational pull of the mother-tongue, except for a few faint traces. It will show that this pronunciation contains a larger number of vowels, diphthongs and consonants than the average Indian pronunciation of English; that it has a stress-system and a system of intonation; and that it is completely intelligible to speakers of other educated dialects of English as well as to speakers of the local dialects of English in India.

It may be objected that there can be no Indian standard of pronunciation since English is not the mother-tongue of Indians, except for a microscopic minority community. But a spoken standard is a *class* dialect. In that sense it is an eclectic and an artificial standard. Even Received Pronunciation is a class dialect in England. The Welsh have a Welsh standard of speaking English which differs from R P., in several ways. The one test in the matter is whether, as a class dialect, Educated Indian Pronunciation is completely intelligible to speakers of other class dialects of English abroad and to Indians who use the average Indian pronunciation. This is the *raison d'être* of the class dialects of a world language like English. It can be said that educated Indian Pronunciation is as worthy of acceptance in this regard as any other brand of English. It awaits the devoted labours of a phonetician who can analyse and describe it so that it can be taught in our schools and colleges.

IX

THE ROLE OF INSPECTORS

THE EDUCATION inspector is an administrative officer who has hardly any time to attend to the teaching of English, or any other subject for that matter, in schools. He has multifarious duties to discharge in the field of administration, policy and finance. He has to attend to welfare schemes like the management of mid-day meals. Even if he has been trained to give guidance to teachers and has presumably served as a teacher himself for some years, his official duties sit so heavily on him that he is incapacitated from being of any use to teachers who work under his authority.

But today, perhaps more than ever before, there is the great need to keep teachers informed of the latest developments in their own subjects and in the techniques applicable to the teaching of those subjects. Again, it is no exaggeration to say that a good and conscientious teacher is much more difficult to find today than was the case in the past. The quality of teachers seems to have deteriorated very fast. Various causes have contributed to this result. But the fact remains that teachers need more guidance in their work today than they used to do in the past. When a trained graduate joins the profession, the first two or three years of his service should really be regarded as an extension of his teaching practice, for he still tends to practise ideas assimilated by him imperfectly while studying in his training college.

But who is to guide the teacher and help him to a better understanding of his duties? The Headmaster is as busy as the Education Inspector. We cannot assume that he is familiar with the teaching of subjects other than his own. It would be possible for the

teacher's professor in the training college to write to the headmaster informing him of the points on which the teacher under him needs help. But the over-worked headmaster may just 'file' that paper or seek to victimise the new recruit if he is not well disposed towards the latter. A conference of headmasters and the teaching staff in training colleges has been suggested for this purpose, a conference in which the headmasters discuss the difficulties experienced by their teachers and the training college staff keep them in touch with current research. A conference of this kind may lead to good general discussions. But it is unlikely that it will help teachers to meet the practical situation that faces them every day in their classes.

The one solution that the situation seems to demand today is the creation of posts of chief officers, who should be experts in charge of each subject and whose duty it would be to visit the schools in their area and help teachers on the spot. Inspectors have generally been looked upon, so far, as fault finding officers. They have inspired terror rather than affection in teachers. But a subject inspector or adviser should be a person other than the Education Inspector. It should be possible for teachers to look to him as a friend and guide rather than as an officer. As has been remarked, an adviser should not 'be "the man or woman who visits once a term to dictate exactly which educational whim you are to follow".

There is, no doubt, enough work awaiting a subject inspector, should one be appointed. When he visits a school, the adviser for English can discuss with the teachers of English there the points in the syllabus or in textbooks which they may not have understood fully. He can teach a lesson to demonstrate a particular technique and discuss with teachers the weaknesses of their pupils in the subject. Teachers in rural areas would especially like the subject adviser to talk to them on current research. He can see for himself how far the English section of the school library has been used and whether the right supplementary books have been

ordered. He can discuss with teachers the relative value of the methods learnt by them in training colleges and report regularly to the headmaster on steps to be taken for further improvement. A subject adviser's visits will almost make it impossible for the teacher to teach in two different ways, — on the lines of the modified oral method when the inspector visits the class and the 'grammar and translation' method when he is away — as it frequently happens now.

Another part of the subject adviser's duties would be to keep up a continual contact with the training colleges in his area. He should be the connecting link between schools and training colleges. He can be helpful in acquainting the staff of training colleges with the strong and weak points of their ex-trainees and the efficacy or limitation of the techniques which they advocate. He can help to soften the rigidity of their approach, — as when theorists say that the mother-tongue should be *strictly* kept out of the oral method.

The subject adviser can also co-operate with the Extension Service Centres in his area and organise short courses and seminars in his subject for secondary teachers from rural areas.

A few States like Andhra Pradesh have already created some posts of subject advisers. The question might arise: for how many subjects can State Governments afford to create such posts? Teachers of each subject will clamour for a recognition of the importance of their subject. It is obsessions of this kind that stand firmly in the way of all educational reform. Every academician is familiar with frustrations of this kind, for experts claim for their subject what they regard as facility and recognition extended to another subject, irrespective of the question of need or merit. Governments will have to lay down policies about priorities in this field and proceed to implement them forthwith. Any dispassionate view will, I think, approve of English and Science as the first priorities in this field. There are important reasons for special attention being paid to these subjects. I

would also put the regional language as the third subject on this list. With the rapid expansion of primary education we find that teachers of the regional languages also do not know their job well. The time has come for planning the teaching of regional languages on the scientific lines on which the teaching of English is being planned today. This is also significant from another point of view. It has been suggested, in the interest of national integration that every Indian should learn a regional language other than his own, in addition to Hindi. This will be easy if the teaching of each regional language is planned on scientific lines. It will especially facilitate the diffusion of Hindi which will ultimately be the sole official language.

If only one subject adviser is appointed for each State, it is obvious that he cannot perform his duties adequately. He has to be supported by a group of assistant advisers. Some outstanding teachers of English can be recognised as assistant advisers and visit schools and meet teachers regularly in the zones assigned to them. A subject adviser can at the most manage 80 to 100 schools by himself. It is also important that his area should include elementary classes where the need for expert guidance is particularly acute.

There are, of course, difficulties in the way of securing the services of assistant advisers. Should an assistant adviser continue to teach in one school and supervise others? If he does this it will help to keep him in touch with reality. Should he be trained in an Institute or be preferably a lecturer from one of the training colleges? In any case, he should have the necessary theoretical background. We have also to reckon with the fact that qualified and trained high school teachers are not easily available. Even if they were, they would not have the experience of teaching English in the early stages, for they are asked to teach high school classes as a rule. Again, assistant teachers generally look forward to being promoted as head-masters and they may not like to be deflected from the promotion due to them. Satisfactory solutions can,

no doubt, be found for many of these problems. The point is that teachers are badly in need of such guidance and supervision. They will joyously welcome an adviser who brings with him the latest books on the teaching of English, demonstrates to them the use of new audio-visual aids and circulates to them lists of books, with his own comments, from time to time.

If the creation of new posts, like those of subject advisers, does not recommend itself to some of the authorities, reform can be attempted in another way. The English staff of training colleges can be enlarged and some of them given light lecturing work so that they may have the time to visit schools and meet teachers. This will help to link up schools with the training colleges in their area. It will also be possible for training college lecturers to follow up the work of their own ex-trainees in the schools to which they are posted.

It would be interesting to refer, in this connection, to an important experiment in this field in North Sudan referred to by Mr. J. A. Bright of Makerere College, Uganda. The Bakht er Ruda pattern of the training of teachers of English shows how it is possible, by administrative devices, to enable one or two 'experts' to have powerful influence over a wide area. From 1950 to 1955 a subject head and two lecturers were put in charge of English teaching in 80 schools in addition to training work. The subject head was responsible for training sixty teachers on an average in a year. He could manage about forty with this additional work. But 29 schools with 116 English teachers were inspected. The subject head was also responsible for the selection or production of suitable textbooks. He had also to conduct teaching experiments which led to the replacement of one set of textbooks by another. He was able to inspect about half the teachers from the previous course. He could plan the training course for the next year on the basis of his knowledge of the weaknesses and strong points of these teachers. The subject head was also responsible

for running refresher courses and for holding the Intermediate School Final Examination.

All this work was carried out with the help of two lecturers. They did their own lecturing work for the teacher training course besides helping the head in experimental teaching, handwriting experiment, organisation, and marking of the Intermediate Final Examination, etc. The subject head inspected eight schools in February during the year. The first lecturer inspected ten schools in July - August and five in November - December. The second lecturer inspected six schools in November - December.

Mr. Bright explains the adjustments necessary for the above schedule as follows: "The basis of the staffing was that while here was plenty for three people to do in the Training College, any two could for periods of up to a month carry on the work of the other one.... Every-body got eighty days of leave but no other holidays and the Training College and its three associated schools were always working when other schools were closed and, conversely other schools were open when the training college was closed for students' holidays and staff were free for inspection duties."

We are informed that, during the five years in which this arrangement worked, "the schools increased from about 40 to about 80, the amount of time given to English was cut 25%, the general standard raised and the finals hand-over effected with no fall in standards".

Some of the advantages of this system are set forth by Mr. Bright: "All advice came from the same people who shared a common purpose and outlook and knew from participation what had gone on during training.... We had nobody to blame for bad teaching but ourselves.... The results of training were perpetually examined in detail in the field by the people who had done it. The feed-back led to constant changes of emphasis and approach... There was the further advantage that all 'inspectors' were practising teachers and quite prepared, if necessary, to demonstrate in

schools.... There was built-in provision for continuity. Demonstration Teachers in the Training College schools were picked for special teaching ability. During the inspection period the best of them went out to schools for a fortnight simply as demonstrators. When the Subject Head left, a lecturer moved up and a demonstration teacher became a lecturer.... It developed initiative and originality in the teachers. The criticism always advanced was that so closed a system would stifle anything creative in the teachers. Our experience was the exact reverse. It would appear that by establishing a tradition, we increased the teachers' initiative . "There was a fascinating variety of work open to the Subject Head and his staff."

Red tape in India comes in the way of creative experiments and does its worst to stifle all dynamic activity. Even assuming that the Bakht ei Ruda pattern is a wild idea, will it not be desirable to prove that it is wild? The adjustments that Mr. Bright speaks of (some of these are mentioned under 'advantages') are not such as to wreck any administrative machinery. All that they imply is a legitimate manipulation of vacations for schools, selection of the right Subject Head and implicit confidence in the Subject Head and the delegation to him of the power to promote his assistants as he deems proper. A Department of Education can certainly permit some departure from the dull uniformity of school vacations, part with some of its power of promotion and demotion and put the English Methods Department of a training college effectively in charge of the teaching of English in schools in a specified area. The experiment should be given a period of five years so that it can be properly evaluated at the end of the period. If a few such experiments are conducted simultaneously, it will be possible to explore the possibilities of what seems to be a fruitful idea. If it was possible for the English Methods Department of a training college in North Sudan to undertake to train and inspect at the same time and cut 25% of the time given to English

with no fall in standards, there is no reason why some of the training colleges in India should not register a similar achievement.

X

TRAINING SCHOOLS AND TRAINING COLLEGES

TEACHERS who have passed their matriculation or school final examination or have joined the profession as undergraduates cannot obviously be admitted to a training college. They receive their training in Training Schools. Delhi calls its Training School a 'Training Institute'. There are three kinds of training institutions in West Bengal, — those meant for graduates, undergraduates and matriculates. The training institutions there meant for matriculates are called "Junior Basic Training Colleges". No such distinction is generally observed. Teachers who are graduates are trained in Training Colleges and the rest in Training Schools. Training Schools are sometimes separately organised for men teachers and women teachers. Madras State has, for example, 71 basic training schools for men and 43 for women. These schools are sometimes attached as training sections to high schools. This is also done occasionally in Andhra Pradesh. The headmaster is then also a lecturer who trains some of the junior members on the staff of the high school. There are 85 training schools in Andhra Pradesh, 82 in Kerala and 106 in Madhya Pradesh.

The general practice is to admit for training teachers who are at least matriculates. But in the four training schools at Manipur, those who have passed their eighth standard of high school and are teachers are also admitted for training. This is apparently because of the difficulties experienced in the recruitment of qualified teachers by authorities there.

The duration of the course is for two years in U.P. but only for one year in Manipur and Himachal

Pradesh. Trainees have to study a few general subjects relating to Educational Theory and Methods in two special subjects, of which English can be one. But they have to obtain pass marks in the examination on each one of the two special subjects. This is the general pattern. It would seem that two years of training would be necessary, (including teaching practice).

It is doubtful how far teachers are trained for actual teaching work in the training schools. As in the training colleges, a good deal of time is spent on the informational content of the course rather than on coming to grips with the very syllabus and the textbooks which the teacher trainees are expected to handle after training. Among the training school syllabuses for English that I have been able to consult, the Kerala one seems to be fairly modern. It consists of two course units. The first one lists Structure, Pronunciation, Vocabulary and Comprehension as topics for study. The second course unit concentrates on the following:

- 'The Language Problem in India.
- Principles of Language Study.
- 'The Teaching of English as a Second Language.
- First Lessons in English.
- The Teaching of English in the Middle Stage.
- Tests and Examinations in English.
- General Phonetics.
- The Organisation of English Teaching.

Even assuming that a suitable syllabus is adopted, the all-important question is about the supervisors who will teach it and teach the teacher trainees. The present practice is to appoint to the staff of training schools trained graduates who have some experience of teaching. Every graduate teacher aspires to be a headmaster or an inspector. If he has a first class B.A. Degree or an M.A. Degree, he becomes a lecturer in a training college. Even bright lecturers in training colleges gravitate towards administrative posts whenever there is an opportunity. One therefore frequently

finds on the staff of training schools frustrated young men who can neither be lecturers in training colleges nor inspectors under education departments. Or there are headmasters who are preoccupied with administrative problems and do not therefore have much time for training young teachers. One can understand the teaching practice of teacher trainees supervised by headmasters. But it would not be fair to put headmasters in charge of a full-fledged training programme.

The staffing of training schools, therefore, presents a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is apparently based on the notion that, if graduates are trained in training colleges, undergraduates should be trained in training schools. If trained M.A.s are lecturers in training colleges, trained graduates can be lecturers in training schools. This idea of a 'hierarchical' order in every walk of life vitiates all values and has to be rooted out of our national life. We tend to think of educational employment as a ladder, with the primary teacher as its lowest rung and the university professor or vice-chancellor as the highest. This is but too true, when we think of the economic value attached to these posts. It may not be possible for us to revise the economic structure of educational employment until we have the resources. But we can at least clear our mind of 'cant' and upgrade posts where it is possible to upgrade them.

Training schools are established for carrying out training programmes which are at least as important as the programmes current in training colleges. The foundational work which a teacher has to do in middle schools or in the first year of high schools is, in a sense, even more important than work done in later stages. But we cling firmly to the fiction that half-trained undergraduates are good enough for the first years of teaching and that trained graduates should teach only the higher classes. No improvement in teaching is possible until we realise that middle school teaching requires as much specialised training as high school teaching does. An immediate measure of reform

would call for a recognition of training schools as institutions of the same importance as training colleges. The staffs of training schools should have the same status as the staffs of training colleges. They should have similar qualifications even if undergraduates have to be admitted for training for lack of the requisite number of graduate teachers.

It is also necessary to revise the objectives of the course in English Methods in training schools. The teachers come poorly equipped for their work. They have an extremely inadequate knowledge of the English language and no training in Methods will improve their quality unless they are given a course in Modern English Usage and specially in the language items of the syllabus which they are expected to teach. The course in Methods should itself be severely practical, giving the trainee practical advice on how to teach the syllabus instead of introducing him to subtle theoretical distinctions. A large part of the course should consist of intensive teaching practice.

There are about 175 training colleges in India and graduate teachers are trained in these institutions. These are therefore the nerve-centres of secondary education in the country. It is here that secondary teachers get trained in the methods of teaching their subjects before they are posted to schools in which to practise them. 175 training colleges are far too few for this purpose compared with the size of the country's population. It is high time the training schools were upgraded into training colleges, specialising in the training of teachers at the middle school level.

The 20 periods a week that a training college devotes to the training of graduate teachers are distributed over courses in Educational Psychology, the History of Education, Health and Hygiene, and the like. Only 2 periods per week out of 20 periods are devoted to the Methods Course relating to a subject. But a subject method course ought to be the main concern of the teacher under training. Graduate teachers are expected at present to specialise in the methodology of two

subjects. Only 4 periods a week are set apart for this purpose. It is essential that the courses in theoretical knowledge should be turned into general reading courses and that the bulk of the time available should be given to the subject method courses. As Mr. H. V. George remarked in the Srinagar Seminar on the teaching of English in Secondary Schools organised by the Central Institute of English (May 1961): "One drawback of the present training college work was compartmentalization, which represented a basic illogicality. The student was supposed to be able to integrate the various units of specialist instruction — Psychology, Hygiene, History of Education, even Blackboard Drawing. But the college lecturer was assumed not to have effected any such integration himself. There was no reason why a lecturer in language-methodology should not himself deal with those aspects of psychology, hygiene and so on which were relevant to his subject. It should be *his* duty first, and then only the student's to integrate the subjects of instruction."

The training college programme in the methodology of English itself consists of the study of such peripheral subjects as the History of Language Teaching and a Comparison of Language Teaching Methods. It is good to read about these subjects. But they have no direct bearing upon teaching. What is needed is a practical course insisting on a thorough knowledge and command of language teaching techniques and devices like substitution tables and structural and comprehension exercises.

Another fact worth noting is that the graduate teachers themselves are not sure of their command of the English language. The only grammar they generally know is traditional or prescriptive grammar and this does not help them to teach structural syllabuses. What they need is a content course in English along with a methods course. A content course for them should not mean a study of some more novels and plays or of a book of traditional grammar. It should take the form of a detailed consideration of the High

School Syllabus in English. While considering the High School Syllabus the lecturer should specially dwell on those items in which students are weak and give them practice exercises in items like the Tenses, the Articles, Concord of Number, Person and Tense, etc. Some graduate teachers do not even know how to use the question forms of English in the right way. They should be instructed thoroughly in the mastery and use of modern books like Zandvoort's *A Handbook of English Grammar* (Longmans Green & Co), Hornby's *Guide to Patterns and Usage of English* (Oxford University Press) and Paul Robert's *Patterns of English* (Harcourt Brace & Co.). They should be encouraged to consult books like Michael West's *A General Service List of English Words* and *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. They should have a large amount of practice in speaking and writing within a limited vocabulary, and in making simple drawings on the blackboard. They should have a course in phonetics as part of their degree course in English so that they can learn how to teach pronunciation when they join a training college. No knowledge of any of these essentials is required of a student at present to pass the B. Ed. Examination.

The structure of the question paper at the public examination itself needs to be changed. There should also be an oral examination to test the spoken English of trainees at the end of the course.

PART III

ENGLISH IN OUR UNIVERSITIES

XI

PRE-UNIVERSITY ENGLISH AND COMPULSORY ENGLISH IN THE DEGREE COURSE

THE CRISIS in the teaching of English has developed into a crisis in our higher education itself; for English is also the medium of instruction and examination in most of our universities. The expert committees appointed by the University Grants Commission have, time and again, reported that a serious malady has gripped our academic life. Blood transfusion may cure this anaemic state temporarily. But borrowing ideas from abroad is no sign of permanent intellectual health. We have to revise our courses in the light of new objectives if we wish to survive as an intellectual people. We have to eliminate the one-way educational traffic, — a servile dependence on lecturing — and make class section meetings or tutorials the primary basis of teaching if we like our students to be, not automatic reproducing machines but quickened and evolving minds. Finally, we should drastically revise our test procedures and remember that an examination is the measurement of a living achievement, not merely a stock-taking of dead crumbs of knowledge.

I am filled with despair when I think of weighty academic bodies ranged on the side of status quo. As an academic people, we are obsessed with the importance of our own special subject and we refuse to take either an integral or an evolutionary view of knowledge. One may even be pardoned sometimes for thinking that our colleges will come into their own when there are no affiliating universities to rule them. A college may be left free to devise its own teaching

methods, hold its own public examinations and award its own degrees. This will at least put the colleges on their mettle. It will no longer be possible for them to shine in plumes borrowed from universities and to seek shelter behind statutes and ordinances. The worst of them will then wither away and the best survive.

It is easy to realise why we are faced with such a situation if we have a look at the achievement of Pre-University students in English.

Matriculates who are supposed to have mastered a vocabulary of 2500 words and 250 structures by the time they complete their studies at High School, obviously fall short of these aims in their actual achievement. Many of them do not even have a mastery over even a thousand words and they cannot handle even simple structures correctly. There should be generally a remedial course for post-matriculates during the summer vacation preceding the Pre University year, or a special intensive course during the first few weeks of the Pre University year, which seeks to remedy these deficiencies in their equipment. When an integrated Higher Secondary Course is evolved, the contents of the remedial course could be absorbed in a graded manner in the Higher Secondary Course itself. Similarly, the course in special vocabulary, indicated by the second kind of text material, mentioned below, should be preferably taught in the same manner.

Pre-University or Higher Secondary School teachers of English should have special in service training in the new techniques of language teaching. Short courses should be organised for teachers by universities, especially for those who have not received training in the Central Institute of English or in any of the Seminars organised by the British Council.

The importance of English studies vis-a-vis University education has been generally realised now and this needs no special emphasis at this stage. But it is necessary to emphasise the importance of the time

allotted to English in the Pre-University time-table. The Secondary Education Commission, the Kunzru Committee and the members of the Seminar on the Teaching of English convened by the U.G.C. have all expressed their view that special importance should be attached to the study of English in the Pre-University Course, since this is a crucial year in the life of a university student. His general grasp of other subjects depends on his comprehension of books in English even when the university medium is regionalised. University libraries are mostly stocked with books in English on all subjects and it would be difficult for a university student to master any subject without supplementing his knowledge of that subject by reading books about it in English. Eight periods per week should be allotted to English in the Pre-University time-table. There is some disparity in the number of course units that students are expected to study during the Pre-University year. Some universities have prescribed seven course units, and some others nine. Eight course units would be a feasible work-load for the Pre-University student. A course unit would mean a subject taught for four hours per week, two being lecture hours and two tutorial periods, carrying 100 marks in the public examination. Of the eight course units contemplated for the Pre-University year, two should be devoted to English.

Linguistic and literary aims are not quite separable in a study of English at the Pre-University stage. The main objectives are expression, oral and written, and comprehension either of written or spoken material. Of these, the most important objective is that of comprehension of written material. But the importance of expression cannot be minimised since students have to write their answers in English in many universities. English is still an important language in academic as well as official and non-official spheres of activity. Language skills will have to be cultivated through a study of excellent specimens of living English both in prose and verse, though prose

would naturally occupy a prominent place.

The Pre-University Course in English should consist of two course units, — one devoted to text-materials and the other to the cultivation of language skills. As for text-materials, it would be desirable to have four kinds of texts. One of the prescribed texts should be a book of prose selections of about 75 pages, consisting of specimens of living English, well within the range of the student's experience and interests. This book should be prescribed for intensive study for the purpose of adding to the active vocabulary of the student. There should be a second book of prose passages of about 75 pages which introduces the student to factual English, to the vocabulary, either of the Physical or Social Sciences, since the Pre-University student has to read books in English either on the one or the other course that he has taken up for study. Passages of this kind have been prepared by the Central Institute of English, introducing words chosen after a good deal of research in the vocabulary of relevant texts, figuring in natural context. Either these or similar passages produced on the Vocabulary basic to the course in the Physical or Social Sciences could be studied in the class. The third textbook should be a non-detailed text, preferably a book of one-act plays or short stories or a short unabridged novel. Simplified or abridged novels should, as far as possible, be used as supplementary reading material by students. The aim in prescribing this non-detailed text is to expand the passive vocabulary of the student. The fourth kind of text-material should consist of 500 lines of poetry, preferably poetry couched in the living English idiom. The majority of poems to be studied should be lyrics well within the range of the student's experience and sensibility.

If four texts are regarded as too many for the purpose, the prose and poetry selections should be combined into one book. The general aim in the first course unit is to promote the student's comprehension of reading material, special as well as general, to expand his

vocabulary both active and passive, general and technical, and to help him to improve his expression.

The second course unit should be specifically devoted to a cultivation of language skills. The bibliography given in this connection by the U.G.C. Seminar on the Teaching of English is quite useful. No single book of grammar should be followed in the class. The teacher should devise his own material for teaching by referring to the books mentioned in the bibliography. The language skills to be cultivated are:

1. *The mechanics of expression*, consisting of sentence patterns, spelling and punctuation.
2. *Vocabulary*: The student can be introduced to groups of words based on similarity or dissimilarity in meaning or in form.
3. *Comprehension*: The student should be introduced to unseen passages in prose and verse and tested on his comprehension of the same. He can be asked to prepare the precis of given passages. New type questions may be used in tutorial classes for all these purposes in order to facilitate the work of the tutor as well as the pupil.
4. *Composition*: The student should be encouraged to write essays consisting of about 300 words, or a letter or dialogue of 100 words or develop a story from given outlines.

The cultivation of expression also implies a recognition of effective expression, — the use of appropriate sentence patterns and words for given thematic material and of idiomatic and figurative language. Exercises should be taken up in the tutorial class which will enable the student to recognise and appreciate such expression. The text-materials mentioned above can be used with great advantage for all these purposes.

5. *Spoken English*: The student should be enabled to realise the multisyllabic nature of English words, and the importance of word-stress. If possible, he should be taught the international phonetic

script. He should be engaged in conversation on day-to-day affairs and made to narrate his experiences in English. There should be an oral test at the end of the year, held by the college.

There has been far too much lecturing at the Pre-University stage. There should be a minimum of lecturing and maximum of tutorial work during the Pre-University year. A course unit implies two lecture periods and two tutorial periods per week. The teacher should in fact be left free to utilise these four periods in the manner he thinks best. While teaching English as a foreign language, one would prefer to have three tutorial periods and just one lecture period per week. The lecture period should be utilised only for imparting fresh information either with regard to language or the text-materials. The lecture period should not be utilised for reading the text sentence by sentence in the class. This should be done for the first few pages to begin with, just to demonstrate the methods of study to the student. The textbook could then be divided into feasible home-assignments, and questions could be asked of students during the tutorial periods on these assignments. The tutorial period should be really a discussion and question-and-answer class and not merely a period in which students write composition exercises on set themes. Again, the texts should be primarily studied from the language point of view, promoting the expansion of general and special vocabulary, comprehension and correct expression.

As for the eight periods mentioned above, three can be set apart for three lectures per week. One lecture period can be utilised throughout the year for teaching the two books of prose selections and passages. Another lecture period can be utilised for the book of poems and the non-detailed text throughout the year. The third lecture period can be set apart for elucidation of points of usage or functional grammar or general linguistics as may be useful to the student.

Of the five tutorial periods per week one can be utilised for mechanics of expression throughout the year, for students need a thorough grounding in this aspect of language work. A second period can be reserved for composition throughout the year. A third period can be devoted to comprehension both of unseen passages and of the non-detailed text. A fourth tutorial period can alternate between vocabulary and the cultivation of Spoken English. The fifth tutorial period should be devoted to work on the two prose texts and the poetry text.

It may be thought that eight periods per week are far too many to be devoted to English in the Pre-University class. But this is not an arbitrary number. These periods are necessary if the Pre-University student's level of actual achievement in English has to be up to the mark indicated above. Vocabulary and Spoken English can be dropped and one period omitted from the course. But this will mean a real handicap to the student to that extent.

Each tutorial group should, ideally speaking, consist of ten to twelve students. It is important to observe this restriction regarding numbers in classes in which composition work is corrected and the corrections are explained to students. Larger groups of tutorials may be devised only when it is inevitable. In no case should the number in a group exceed 25 students.

This is how a new orientation can be given to the study of English in the Pre-University year. It would follow that examinational procedures also will have to change considerably. The question papers set for the annual or public examinations today are not based on the objectives of the course. They reflect the number of textbooks prescribed rather than the aims and objectives of study. They also adhere to a traditional pattern and there is very little flexibility in the test techniques that are employed by examiners. Examinations can be improved in reliability as well as validity by making use of new test techniques, and by grounding them firmly in the objectives of the course.

Credit should be given for internal work to the extent of 25% of the total marks. This should be based on the average of all the work done by the student throughout the year, including his participation in tutorial classes, fortnightly and terminal tests. 75% of the total number of marks should be set apart for the public examination. It should be compulsory for the student to earn a minimum of pass marks in these papers set at the public examination.

If there are eight course units prescribed for the Pre-University year, the student will have to attend 32 periods per week, about 16 of these being tutorial periods. It is very important that our students are made to work for about 45 to 60 hours a week, including home work, as American students do. Thirty-two periods a week would be fair attendance for students.

As for Compulsory English in the Three Year Degree Course, its extent has been reduced to two years or even one year in some universities. Several universities do not have English as a compulsory subject for science students, except during the first year. This is because the Science Faculties think that the course is predominantly literary and it cannot, therefore, be of any use to science students. But one year is hardly enough for training university students in comprehension and expression. Again, science students need this training as much as Arts students, possibly even more, for a regional medium in science subjects will take a longer time to materialise. What is needed is a reorientation of the course so as to suit the acute needs of the learners. Commerce students also can have the same course, and additional course units in Commercial English.

The new objectives of the course can be briefly set forth as follows. The first objective would be the ability to read and comprehend any modern English writing for cultural purposes, specially the literature on the student's own special subject. This means that one of the texts prescribed for the first or Pre-Professional Year should be a book of passages which introduces students to the special (not technical)

vocabulary used in Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture and the like. The student should also be able to follow the lectures delivered on these subjects. Another objective is to promote the student's ability to express himself with ease, in speech and in writing, on a variety of topics and specially on his own subject.

A literary objective can also be achieved by taking care to prescribe as texts modern English classics which are universal in their appeal and not local in colour or antiquated in style. The emphasis will be on language study. But recognition of effective literary expression will also be a prominent aim. I do not think that a Shakespeare play should any longer have a place in Compulsory English, because we will have to teach Shakespeare in a strange way at this level, — encourage students to appreciate Shakespearian substance and warn them against the abounding Elizabethanisms in Shakespearian English. It is high time that Shakespeare was accepted as a subject of study in place of Chaucer in the Special English Course and Chaucer accommodated in the M.A. degree course.

We can have two course units in English during the first year, — one in prescribed texts in modern prose, poetry and drama and another in the direct cultivation of language skills,— mechanics of expression, vocabulary, comprehension, expression and Spoken English. Two periods of lectures or tutorials per week will suffice for the first and two periods of tutorials for the second course unit. The same arrangement can continue for the second year.

As for the third year, the course unit in language skills should continue with two periods a week. As for the section on expression or composition, students can be given practice in translation, along with precis and essay-writing. Some practice should also be given in Spoken English, — at least in word-stress and in the use of the international phonetic script so that students know how to consult Daniel Jones' *An English Pronouncing Dictionary*. Since they have studied English

for several years, they should know how to speak it with tolerable ease. I include translation because it promotes an activity of some national importance. It is dangerous to introduce translation at an earlier stage, when the student's grasp of English is considerably weak. We should concern ourselves here with translation from English into the regional language. Translation from regional languages into English should really be the special field of students of Optional or Special English.

I include translation here because it is the great need of the hour and we have yet done nothing to train a band of translators. Translations of scientific and informative writings in English are needed for raising regional languages to the status of media of instruction for higher education. Translations current now prove the need for training in this field.

Translation of the kind mentioned above serves two purposes: (1) It tests the student's comprehension of a passage in English. (2) It tests his capacity to translate it idiomatically into the regional language. Obviously, for implementing this course in translation, the professor of English will have to work in close collaboration with the professor of the regional language and the professor of the subject from which the passage to be translated is selected. A student of Physics, Economics or Philosophy will thus be trained in translating English writing on his subject into his own language. We can then expect students to gradually enrich their languages with translations of works on their subjects.

The course units in Optional English have so far been literary in character. But there is a gap between the Compulsory Course in English and the Special Course in English language and literature. Many undergraduates do not need a literary course in English. But it is desirable that the best of them should be trained to cultivate grace of style and elegance of speech. The Optional Course can, with advantage, be remodelled for this purpose.

The presentation of Indian thought to the outside

world is an important matter. This possibility is, at present, confined roughly to the Humanities, especially to creative writing. It can generally be assumed that such interpreters usually come from among students who have the necessary command over the English language. Our young men and women who are going to be in the forefront of the academic field in their own subjects and, therefore, in a position which necessarily brings in international contacts, or in diplomatic service, have to express themselves, both in speech and writing in a manner far above the average. Course units in Optional English, in addition to Compulsory English, have therefore to be thrown open to science students as well, and not merely to the Arts students as now. And this should be done even in professional courses like Medicine and Engineering, after the pre-professional year. Further, the nature and scope of these optional courses in English have to change a great deal in order to accommodate the new objectives. The literary material prescribed for these optional course units should be modern, or at least predominantly modern. There should also be course units in Optional English (as distinguished from Special or Principal English) which promote grace and elegance of expression in students,—a unit in the Theory of Style, for instance. This is more useful to such students than a course unit in the Principles of Literary Criticism, a typical form of English literature or a period of literary history. The course unit in the Principles of Literary Criticism can be earmarked as an extra optional for students specialising in other languages. Along with the Theory of Style, there should be an optional unit in practical phonetics,—training in the intonation and stress-patterns of English speech. A third optional unit would be the Theory of Translation and practice in translation from a regional or classical language into English. If students of English literature are given practice in the translation of creative writing in verse and prose, students of philosophy or physics can have practice in translating passages on their own subjects into their own

regional languages. It should be possible for undergraduates, whatever their special subjects, to take up these course units.

The objectives of this course will be (i) to introduce students to the finer graces of style which are not expected of the Compulsory English student; (the course will be intended for students of any subject who aspire to be in the front rank of academic life, administration or industry and have, therefore, to prepare for international contacts and in some cases, for interpreting Indian thought to other countries or governments); (ii) to make them familiar with modern literary classics in English (and modern European classics through English translations) as a general cultural attainment; (the emphasis will be neither on linguistic nor on critical investigation, though these may figure in a general comprehension of the works prescribed. The emphasis will be on the stylistic aspects of these works and the tests will concentrate on these details.) (iii) to enable them to translate standard Indian writing on their subject into English and to present Indian thought in powerful and graceful language; (iv) to enable them to master the finer graces of Spoken English such as intonation and the stress-patterns of English speech.

There can be a course unit in optional English for S. S. L. C. as well as Pre-University students. This arrangement obtains at present in our Boards and Universities. The general aim in these courses will be the attainment of an intimate knowledge of English prose and verse suited to their comprehension level.

The courses in Optional English can be planned as follows. We can have a course unit with prescribed texts during the first year, — a book of some long modern poems, a play or a book of one-act plays and an outstanding work from 20th century prose literature.

Two course units can be planned for the second year, — one in the theory and practice of Style with prescribed specimens and another in practical phonetics. The third course unit — one in the theory and

practice of translation from a regional or classical language into English — can be studied during the third year. Option can also be given to students to take up one of these during the first year and the other two during the second or third year.

A course unit in the Principles of Literary Criticism and another in the Theory of Literary Forms can be devised for the benefit of students of other languages who wish to study the modern theory of literature that English literary criticism has to offer. They should be able to take besides the Optional English, these two course units as a 'minor subject' during their second and third years, if they choose to do so.

XII

HONOURS AND POST-GRADUATE ENGLISH

I now come to the Special Course in English Language and Literature. Its besetting sin, as it exists today, in whatever form, is that it is geared mainly to one objective, — mastery of informational content. Let us assume that we have a paper in Elizabethan Literature. We test students here on the information they have gathered about Elizabethan poets, dramatists and prose writers. If we are a little 'high brow', we also test them on the implications of the Renaissance and the Reformation and 'Decadence'. We recommend a few books for study and find out whether the student remembers the 'context' of certain excerpts from these books. The student is well prepared for all this, or, rather, we equip him for it by dictating notes profusely in the class. The student memorises the notes and confronts his examiner with them, reproducing them intelligently if he is intelligent and otherwise if he is dull. If he is brilliant, he adds to the notes by gathering some more critical matter from standard critics, — critics other than those that his professor has drawn upon. The only other thing that happens is that he reads hurriedly, with the professor's help, a few classics from the prescribed period in literary history. There the matter ends. The personality of the student remains untapped. His tastes are not called into play, his critical insight is not awakened, his literary sensitiveness is not in any way enhanced. If anything contrary to this happens at all, it is purely incidental. It is a by-product which brings him no return in the examina-

tion, for the examination aims at testing him on his memory.

Assuming that there are six papers in the Special Course, this is what happens to him six times in his undergraduate years. The same process is repeated with Chaucer, the Restoration Period, the Augustan Period, the Romantic Period, the Victorian Period, and the Modern Period. It is repeated even with the papers in Principles of Literary Criticism, Philology and Prosody. There is excellent scope in these three papers to test the student's own perception of critical, philological and prosodic values. But there is just one question, out of five or six if at all, that asks the student to do this and the student often leaves it untouched. He relies firmly on the dead lumber provided for him in the other four or five to carry him safely to a Degree.

We have to decide how much recall of specific facts and general principles without reference to textbooks we expect from students here and provide for it in the course.

For instance, a course unit in the Principles of Literary Criticism ought necessarily to mean a knowledge of Literary Terms, such as are listed in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M. H. Abrams,¹ and also a knowledge of types of literary criticism, — biographical, historical, psychoanalytical, etc. There can be a question on recall items of this kind. A student can reasonably be expected to write at least six short paragraphs in half an hour. Six such items can therefore be included in the first question, *without any alternatives*. He will only have to mention the salient facts about the items and prominent names associated with them. He will have to write short *paragraphs* and not essay type answers.

No alternatives, again, need be given for the other four questions. Alternative questions have increased in number to an alarming extent in our question papers. They encourage the student to neglect large areas of

¹ Rinehart & Co., N. Y.

subject-matter and concentrate on one or two topics. In framing the other four questions, we have to see that the student is not just asked to write about Imitation, Art for Art's sake, the Function of Literature and other topics of this kind. This encourages him to reproduce ready-made answers and it will be a test of memory, not intelligence. Students should be asked to expound these principles as applied to particular works which they are expected to have read. For instance, they can be asked to bring out the implications of the theory of Imitation with reference to Hardy's *Tess* or of Art for Art's Sake with reference to *De Profundis* or *Marius the Epicurean*. Two questions can be framed to test the student's grasp of problems in this way. Two other questions can elicit essay type answers on Principles, — but in a different way. They should be made to bring out all the implications of a topic like Art and Morality, for instance, historically and analytically. It is possible that this will result in ready-made answers. But the student should be tested in these answers on his ability to marshal facts, to develop an argument and to show a comprehensive approach.

A certain portion of literary history has to be studied. This being quite an extensive area, it is desirable that it should be spread over the Three Year Degree Course as well as the Post-Graduate Course. A beginning can preferably be made with the later periods. For instance, the undergraduate can study the period from 1750 to the present day and the postgraduate student, the period from 1550 to 1750. We can have two papers in literary history, specifying the authors and general topics to be studied. We should also indicate, but not prescribe, the works of authors the student is expected to be familiar with. At Oxford, and I believe, Cambridge, a large number of options are given in the examination paper. But the tutor makes sure, in the course of tutorials, that the student reads all the works that he is expected to read. Again, at the examination, a student answers questions on a wide variety of topics.

An idea of the teaching methods to be adopted can

be indicated by clarifying the changes advocated in examination techniques. Instead of having a stock question on references to the context, it would be desirable to give about 15 excerpts and ask the student to identify the authors of all these excerpts on the basis of his impression of their style, imagery, substance, outlook or any other distinguishing feature. This would be a test of the student's literary taste, of his capacity to recognise diverse literary flavours, styles and techniques. There can be a second question aimed at testing the student's apprehension of the large forces or movements shaping literary activity during a period. Here again, the danger is that the student may resort to cramming. A question like "What is Victorian Compromise?" or "What are the characteristics of Romanticism?" can only elicit a stock answer. But to get the student to discuss the subject in direct relation to one of the books (any one out of a large list) will go a long way towards avoiding this danger. If the above questions are framed more specifically: "Discuss '*In Memoriam*' as an illustration of Victorian Compromise" and "What characteristics of Romanticism can you recognise in Keats' *Hyperion*?", it will be difficult for the student to reproduce a stock answer. Of course, it is assumed, while making this statement that the examiner will not give pass marks to a stock answer on Victorian Compromise or on the Characteristics of Romanticism. Nor should he assign pass marks to a mere summary of *In Memoriam* or *Hyperion*. It is necessary to say this because neither students nor examiners are wanting who do exactly this and nothing more.

A third question can test the student's ability to analyse and estimate the uniqueness of a given work of art. Here, again, the question to be asked is not "Attempt an appreciation of *Prometheus Unbound*", in answer to which the student can write almost anything he likes, but a specific question like: "Would it be true to say that *Prometheus Unbound* falls short of greatness because the symbolism in it is too vague,

not rooted in tradition?" A question like "Write an essay on De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium Eater* considered as a masterpiece of English prose" will be too general and give excellent scope for evasive answers. On the other hand a question like: "Give instances of De Quincey's impassioned prose in *Confessions*. Illustrate the excellences and limitations of his style", is more likely to compel the student to get down to brass tacks or gold pins.

A fourth question can test this very capacity of the student with reference to an author. A question like "Estimate the contribution of Dickens to the development of the English Novel" will result in clap-trap and padding. But a question like: "What are the areas of human character and personality which Dickens apprehends and interprets with genius? Illustrate your answer at every point", will pin the student down to a specific topic. A question like "Give an estimate of Scott as the father of the historical novel" is likely to overwhelm the examiner with heaps of memorised verbiage. But if the student is asked: "Analyse the excellence and limitation of Scott's historical method in fiction with reference to *Kenilworth*", it is likely to be a good test of the student's apprehension of the method itself.

A fifth question can test the student's capacity to deduce critical principles and apply them, not only to a given work or author, but to a *type* of literary creation or a group of authors. A question like "Trace the growth of the domestic novel in 19th century English fiction" is likely to elicit an answer which may be a good or bad summary of what Raleigh or Baker or somebody else has to say on the subject. But if we have a question like: "What are the themes of the 19th century domestic novel? Who are its outstanding characters? What is their impact on you?", we shall probably know whether the student has read some of these novels and thought about them. Similarly, the question: "Write an essay on Pre-Raphaelitism in English poetry" can at the most enable us to test whether the stud-

ent can marshal his facts properly, collate and present critical pronouncements cogently and express himself in good English. On the other hand, the question, "Illustrate the Pre-Raphaelite manner of handling imagery from the works of leading Pre-Raphaelite poets" will test all the things mentioned above and also whether the student has understood what "Pre-Raphaelitism" means.

I assume that a test paper in Special English will be of three hours' duration and contain five questions (with or without alternatives) requiring essay type answers. It would not be fair to expect the student to answer more within three hours. Even if the questions are only five, the pattern suggested above tests various kinds of critical ability, which it is the aim of the Course to foster. The present trend is to exhaust areas of memorised knowledge and not to test the various kinds of critical ability. This 'coverage' also can be achieved by varying the pattern judiciously every time. The aspect of the movement selected for the second type of question can vary each time. If a book of poetry belonging to the period is selected as its pivotal point of illustration, the work taken up for the third question can be a novel, biography, play or a book of essays. The fourth question in the same paper can focus on an author who has worked in a form other than the two figuring in questions 2 and 3. The fifth question can be made to centre round a group or form not referred to in the other three. A similar coverage can be ensured by choosing illustrative works from different sub-periods. The whole idea is to test different kinds of critical ability, not dead wood. A few alternatives can also be given without sacrificing coverage. What is objectionable is the rigidity with which a lifeless pattern is adhered to. Even if the word 'elucidate' is changed to 'comment' in a question, there is the fear 'that this departure from a given form may be resented by students. A test can remain rigid only if it tests formal and lifeless knowledge, not ability. It also follows that our teaching methods have to change, providing for

more tutorials for the discussion of a large number of literary works.

In addition to a course unit in Literary Criticism and two in Literary History, it would be desirable to have one in the Theory of Literary Forms (or Literary Morphology) and another in one of the Literary Forms. To have two such Forms for study may mean fewer opportunities for the student to read as many original works, illustrating the Form, as he likes. (I have also assumed here that, in the Three Year Degree Course, the first year will concentrate largely on general education, like the Old Intermediate year). He should study a major form like Epic, Tragedy, Comedy or Novel. Here again, the principles of test construction will be the same as for literary history. The only change necessary is that, in place of the first question on the identification of literary excerpts we can have a question, calling for short answers, on critical terms relating to Literary Morphology and the prescribed Literary Form. About 20 terms, eliciting three or four explanatory sentences on each, should suffice.

A fifth course unit is desirable in the two special skills necessary to a student of literature, linguistic analysis and scansion, — philology and prosody. There can be a question asking for brief explanatory notes on 10 to 15 philological or prosodic terms. We can have two questions testing the student's ability in the field, — one for writing brief notes on ten or twelve words or pairs of words and another on scansion. Two other questions can call for brief essays on two topics, — one philological and the other prosodic. Here, again, an attempt should be made to get the topic discussed in relation to some assignment which calls forth the student's own understanding into play. For instance, the student can be asked to write an essay, not on Rhyme, but on the feminine rhymes in the works of poets whose metrical practice has been recommended for study. He should be asked to write, not on loan-words from Latin (which can be tested in the item on explanation of words) or on Grimm's Law or Verner's

Law, (a knowledge of which can be tested by giving a group of cognate words for explanation in the question on words), but on a problem like, for instance, the difference between Language and Speech or Inner and Outer Language. Or we can have a question on some fifteen or twenty words or pairs of words, each one of which calls for the application of one or more philosophical principles. We can have a question on prosodic analysis of five or six different passages, each one of which calls for an application of one or more prosodic principles.

We can have a sixth course unit in Shakespeare and in the classical and Christian background of English literature.

Apart from these six course units in Special English and the Compulsory and Optional Courses in English, the student will have to choose two course units as his minor subject. It should be possible for him, as now, to choose these in an allied language: Greek, Latin French or Italian. He can also choose to study a modern Indian or classical language, which may help him to work in the field of interpretative criticism or literary translation. Or he can choose to study an allied subject like Philosophy, Psychology, Aesthetics or Comparative Literature. He can even be enabled to take a course unit in one of these subjects and another in Creative Expression as in American Universities, a course unit which does not attempt to create artists but to train potential artists in the techniques of their art.

Participation in debates and symposia should be regarded as a necessary qualification for a student who graduates with English language and literature. As a prospective teacher, journalist or administrator, he should be able to expound a point of view and discuss its implications. Such a participation should be assigned the value of a half course unit of study in the comprehensive examination and a record of credits maintained accordingly.

The M.A. Degree Course in English has also to be

reconsidered in this context. Dr. Dustoor has made some valuable suggestions about it in his presidential address to the Dharwar session of the All-India English Teachers' Conference and a few different courses, — one in English language and another in English literature. Some universities have also introduced a fresh course unit in American literature, Indo-Anglian literature or Comparative literature. The Hyderabad session of the same Conference has welcomed this departure from the beaten track and also supported the idea of a course in the teaching of English as a foreign language for prospective teachers of English.

We may begin by considering what products we aim at, while formulating a reorientation of the M.A. Degree Course in English. At this specialised stage, we can envisage six products:

1. The secondary or higher secondary teacher of English and the lecturer who specialises in the teaching of Compulsory English in the Three Year Degree Course. (He is mainly concerned with language.)
2. The collegiate lecturer who teaches the Optional and Special courses in English.
3. The research student who wishes to work on literary problems.
4. The research student who wishes to work on linguistic problems.
5. The journalist who desires to write in English.
6. The creative writer or translator.

These are not, of course, mutually exclusive categories. The lecturer or teacher is likely to be a research student, for a research studentship is not a profession. While journalism in English is still a profession in India, the creative writer or translator is not necessarily a professional. He is likely to emerge from the leisurely hours of journalists, teachers and lecturers, or from the class of aristocratic students. There are just a few Indo-Anglian writers who can be regarded as professionals.

All this will have to be taken into account while formulating the Course.

We can think of a minimum number of required courses common to all these categories. There will have to be two course units in literary history covering the period from A.D. 1550 to 1750. We should also have here a course unit in Chaucer just as we had one in Shakespeare and the Christian and Classical background for the B.A. Special Course. One or two universities have already transferred Chaucer from B.A. Special to M.A. There should be a course unit in the evaluation of outstanding theories of art in terms of scientific method, — a kind of analysis of the major problems in aesthetic and literary criticism, in historical perspective. The present course unit which some universities have in Literary Criticism is inadequate for the purpose. We should have a fifth course unit in Contemporary English Usage.

The Optional groups should consist of three course units each. We can have here a group which should be compulsory for the prospective higher secondary or collegiate teacher of the English language in compulsory courses. It should consist of a course unit in the Structure of English, another in the Phonetics of English and a third one in the methodology of language teaching with special reference to the teaching of English.

A second optional group can be devised for the student who wishes to specialise in linguistic research. He can have a course unit in Old English, another in Middle English and a third one in linguistics with special reference to English.

A third optional group can be devised for similar specialisation on literature — a course unit emphasising the literary history of the Old English period rather than its language history, a similar course unit in Middle English Literature and a third one in American, Indo-Anglian, Australian or Comparative Literature. The creative writer will also be interested in this group.

A fourth optional group can be devised for the journalist. He can have a course unit in the Theory and History of Journalism

It would be ideal if those who decide to become college teachers in any subject are given a six month course in the theory of education and in curriculum construction and test procedures, after they take their M.A. Degree. A good part of the antiquated nature of our syllabuses, the mechanical nature of our teaching and the rigidity of our examinational procedures are due to the fact that our collegiate teachers lack such training and become examiners and members of boards of studies and other academic bodies without being equipped for their task.

I have stated that B.A. (Special) students should study Philology or the History of the English Language. It would perhaps be even more desirable to get them to study a course unit in Contemporary English Usage. This will equip them better for their task if they do not proceed to take the M.A. Degree but settle down as secondary teachers after taking their first degree. The course unit in the History of the English Language can then be transferred to the M.A. Course.

Similarly, instead of introducing B.A. (Special) students to literary history, we can get them to study English literary classics purely from an aesthetic stand point, selecting these classics from various periods in literary history. This will be adequate material for study for two course units or papers. The two course units in literary history at the M.A. stage can then be regarded as survey courses concentrating on the literary movements and other developments of the entire period from A.D. 1550 to the present day.

XIII

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN INDIA

1

A GREAT deal of "lit. crit.", or pseudo-literary study is current in many of our universities today. It is detrimental to the teaching of both the English language and English literature. It is fortunate that a good deal of this superfluous activity is making room for plain and sound language teaching. But it is also essential that the teaching of English literature, to those who are equipped for it, should be developed into a healthful and life-giving discipline.

It needs to be stressed in these days when all intellectual enquiry seems to lead to statistical tables or mathematical formulae that literary study contributes as much to maturity of understanding and flexibility of mind as to emotional and imaginative development. It promotes the formation of a many-sided, resilient, evolved and evolving personality. A core of being, capable of endless evolution, is created by literary study. It is a more comprehensive core than the one generated by historical or philosophic enquiry because it is the study of all writing which induces the whole soul of man into activity. It may not be so outstanding a discipline as the study of linguistics with one or two foreign languages, of mathematics or natural science. But literary study draws upon some of the other disciplines naturally and inevitably. It loses somewhat in intellectual rigour when compared with other disciplines. But it scores over them in the mellowness and wholeness of the human personality which it helps to develop because its appeal is as much emotional and

imaginative as it is intellectual.

Literary study has to be conducted from many points of view. The linguistic approach is necessary, for we have to study *Beowulf* and *The Canterbury Tales* with as much perception and understanding as we study *The Waste Land*, if we are to assess them properly. It also makes us aware of the personal and impersonal exercise of language in different kinds of literature. The formal or "aesthetic" approach unravels for us the nature of diverse styles, techniques and literary forms. The psychological approach, supplemented by the biographical, gives us an intimate glimpse into the evolution of a writer's personality. The historical, the sociological and the philosophic approaches help us to relate a work of art to its own environment and connect it with the great political or philosophic movements which it mirrors or against which it is a protest. Finally the essential or evaluative approach attempts to bring out its abiding significance, the light that it throws on the enigma of life or the mystery of the cosmos and the dynamic "aesthesia" through which it accomplishes this. It is only when we gaze through these seven windows that we are privileged to realise a work of art in its essence, its totality. The essence of a work of art is, in the last analysis, the soul of the individual writer or of a whole people that, consciously or unconsciously, it strives to express. Consequently the supreme aim of literary study is to encounter the soul of an individual or people in the faith that this adventure will culminate in the exploration and evolution of one's own soul. When a student achieves this he knows what literature is like in its depth, width and height. It is only then that he can afford to settle down to specialised study in any branch of his subject, — the literary or social history of a period, biographical or philosophic criticism, prosodic or stylistic analysis or textual emendation.

The approach of the non-British student to English literature, is, in many ways, bound to be different from that of the British student. The non-British stud-

ent has no easy access to the "inwardness" of the language, whatever that may mean, and to a whole body of allusions, customs and manners. These are encountered naturally by the British student, at least in a large measure, but the non-British student has to pore over books of social history and of mythological and literary reference before he is able to enjoy a literary work. The handicaps of a European student will not be so serious as those of an Afro-Asian in this regard because the former shares the same cultural heritage. Even a non-British Christian student will have a distinct advantage because he knows the biblical fount of English literature and has, unlike a Hindu or Muslim, been baptised in its waters.

There is another fact that distinguishes the approach of the non-British student from that of the British student. "Literary studies in English", says Dr. Holloway,¹ "will have something else particularly to offer them, — something, that is, in excess of what they offer to students in Britain." But the European student also, and not merely the Afro-Asian, gets from English literature something in excess of what he obtains from his own literature. For example, as Sri Aurobindo observes, he will find that the course of English poetry is more faithful to the genius of poetry than that of any other poetry because it covers the field that lies before the genius of poetry by successive steps which follow the natural ascending order of our developing perceptions: "It began by a quite external, a clear and superficial substance and utterance. It proceeded to a deeper vital poetry, a poetry of the power and beauty and wonder and spontaneous thought, the joy and passion and pain, the colour and music of Life, in which the external presentation of life and things was taken up, but exceeded and given its full dynamic and imaginative content. From that it turned to an attempt at mastering the secret of a clear, measured and intellectual dealing with

¹ In a paper circulated to the Cambridge Conference on the Teaching of English Literature Overseas, July 1962.

life, things and ideas. Then came an attempt, a brilliant and beautiful attempt to get through Nature and thought and the mentality in life and Nature and their profounder aesthetic suggestion to certain spiritual truths behind them. This attempt could not come to perfect fruition, partly because there had not been the right intellectual preparation or a sufficient basis of spiritual knowledge and experience and only so much could be given as the solitary individual intuition of the poet could by a sovereign effort attain, partly because after the lapse into an age of reason the spontaneous or the intenser language of spiritual poetry could not always be found or, if found, could not be securely kept. So we get a deviation into another age of intellectual, artistic or reflective poetry with a much wider range, but less profound in its roots, less high in its growth; and partly out of this, partly by a recoil from it, has come the turn of recent and contemporary poetry which seems at last to be approaching the secret of the utterance of profounder truth with its right magic of speech and rhythm.² Any student whose mother-tongue is not English will find in English literature new material, the like of which he cannot find in his own, — unique varieties of diction like the Shakespearean, the Miltonic and the Wordsworthian; new prose styles like those of Bacon, Browne, Burke and Lamb; new literary forms like Shakespearean tragedy and the dramatic monologue; the evolution of fascinating literary personalities like Shakespeare, Shelley and Keats; charming variations of the European social scene in the essays of Steele, Addison and Goldsmith and in the Victorian novel; the Platonism of Spenser, Shelley and Keats; the typical British reaction to the French Revolution; the peculiar impact of puritanism and of imperialism — the one seen in Milton, the other in Kipling; and the greatness of English poetry which, as Sri Aurobindo says, "of all modern European languages, has the largest, freest poetic energy and natural power."³

² *The Future Poetry*, pp. 81-82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

Nor need we think, when defining general aims, that it is only in Western countries that the study of English literature is calculated "to assist in the interchange of literary experience and values". An interchange of this kind is not only possible but inevitable with the other two groups. The nature of this interchange will naturally differ from group to group. The folk tales and the folk songs of the American Indian and the African have had their own impact on American and European literature. A study of the *Upanishads* and *Gita*, of *Shahnameh* and the *Mahabharata* and of *Panchatantra* and *The Arabian Nights*, colours a good part of English, and indeed European, literature. The modern impact from Afro-Asian countries may not be so perceptible owing to difficulties of translation. But we have to reckon with the influence of writers like Gandhiji, Tagore and Khalil Gibran. The general aim of a study of English literature in Western countries is not merely that of "an interchange of literary experience and values". This applies to the other groups as well. The general aim of the Western student should really be to appreciate the uniqueness of English literature as outlined in the preceding paragraph.

It is true that part of the value of the study of English literature for African students is the assistance it offers in the development of indigenous culture by "making available the literary tradition of an advanced country". In some cases at least this will mean a big leap from naive folk tales and songs to symbolist poetry and the stream of consciousness novel and all the literature of knowledge including encyclopaedias and dictionaries. It will be a transition from oral to written literature. For people who have only an oral tradition in literature, almost everything is bound to be new, — intoxicatingly new. Minor forms like the detective novel, the limerick and the one-act play will be as new to them as epic and tragedy. A textbook on chemistry will be as useful for them as one of the world's classics. All their literary forms will start on a simultaneous career without a time lag, — the epic and ballad with the novel

and short story, the personal essay with the lyric, and history with biography and autobiography. But they need not be obsessed with the past history of English literature simply because they have no literary past of their own. Like developing countries which benefit by the industrial tradition of the West, the literary pioneers also can avoid waste and fruitless experimentation. For example, their drama need not go through the evolutionary ordeal of the Miracle Play, the Morality, the Interlude and classical or vernacular drama before it arrives at Shakespearean tragedy or comedy. Their Ibsenic plays need not follow Shakespeare after an interval of about three hundred years. The social evolution in Africa is itself unprecedented and so will be their literary evolution.

There is, however, a danger which students of English literature in emerging countries will have to avoid if they are to assist in the development of an indigenous culture. Their literary study will be invaluable for them if they choose to become pioneers of a national literature. But there is also the likelihood that they may come under the spell of *La Belle Dame Sans Mercy* and be held in her thrall for ever. The contrast between their own society and the social evolution presented in English literature is so great that they may be tempted to give up the attempt to transform their society and inaugurate their own literary tradition. They may surrender themselves utterly to a kind of colonialism in their intellectual and aesthetic life in spite of their political emancipation. In that case they will be a "lost generation" like those Indians in the fifties of the last century who thought that they lived in a desert, read Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth or Arnold and dreamed of London, Oxford or Cambridge while sipping their brandy or beer. They remembered with avidity Mr. Bumble's workhouse in which Oliver Twist asked for more and also every detail in the topography of *Thyrsis* and *The Scholar-Gipsy*, but not the landscape pictured in Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* or the name of the sage who

educated Rama and his brothers.

The extra benefit which developing countries derive from a study of English literature, Dr. Holloway traces to the impact of the structure and conditions of a "modern western society". I am inclined to agree with him in some measure on this point. In the first place, English literature is remarkable not only for the personal but also the impersonal exercise of language. Burke, Gibbon and Darwin present the facts and ideas of political philosophy, history and science in a language which is as striking for its precision as for its grace, energy or imaginative colour. A study of such historical and scientific prose is very helpful to literary evolution in developing countries. Their creative literatures are flowering beautifully today. It is their "applied" literatures that need to be stimulated now. Our science students have yet to realise that their task is not merely to handle test tubes and telescopes well but to give in their own language a competent and engaging account of what they achieve with these instruments. These and other students have also to distinguish genuine artistic beauty from the false glitter of cliche-ridden passages like the one quoted by Mr. L. D. Lerner in his *English Literature: An Interpretation for Students Abroad*:⁴ "My friends, let us explore all avenues before we abandon our last ray of hope. The hand of doom is upon us. We are in the very jaws of death, and must beware of the snake in the grass. Let us not jump from the frying pan into the fire. If we keep a stiff upper lip we need not fear what the future will hold. We are on the ladder of progress. The cup of fortune is within our grasp. The flood tide of freedom is flowing, and the fruits of progress are ripe for plucking."

The Afro-Asian will find the study of English literature fascinating from another point of view, — the evolution of modern literary art-forms. Half the glory of the Indian Renaissance, for example, consists in the assimilation of modern literary forms like the Novel,

Biography, Autobiography, the Lyric with all its enchanting subdivisions, the Short Story, the Personal Essay and the like for well over a century and a half. Even recent art-forms like the stream of consciousness novel and the modernist lyric have been assimilated and used with remarkable power and originality. The Afro-Asian has his own tradition of epics and romances, songs and plays and sociological and philosophic prose. But modern art-forms are, — if I may use a Marxist term without subscribing to its Marxist content — bourgeois forms and new to the Afro-Asian. These are new to him because the twilight of feudalism lingered for a longer time in this part of the world than in Europe. He has therefore to be grateful to the West for this contribution towards the literary evolution in his own country. A survey of these art-forms gives him a clear insight into their technique and development and is bound to be of immense value.

The impact of important political events on English literature is of great interest to the Afro-Asian for a similar reason. The literary development in Asia and in Europe was more or less on a par till about the middle of the 16th century when Queen Elizabeth ruled over England and Akbar over India. The middle class emerge as a reckoned power about this time in Europe. We have had several Reformations in Asia but only one major Renaissance promoting the secular outlook of common man as a result of the Western impact on Afro-Asian society. A study of the Renaissance, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution and their impact on English literature is bound to be instructive to the Afro-Asian because it is these events which separate the modern world from the old world which held him longer in its grip. Africa and Asia are in the midst of an industrial revolution today. Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* which saw the collapse of civilisation in the rise of industrialism holds a far more vivid meaning for the Afro-Asian today than for the student in Britain. The fervent opposition of Wordsworth and Ruskin to the introduction of the

railways will, for a similar reason be understood more sympathetically in certain parts of Africa at the present moment than in Great Britain. Writings like Burke's speeches on India and America and on the French Revolution, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, Carlyle's *The French Revolution* and Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and *The Crown of Wild Olive* will appeal to the Afro-Asian in a special way, apart from their abiding literary interest.

The manner in which English literature mirrors the gradual evolution of British society from its feudal to its bourgeois form and then to a Welfare State is sure to fascinate the student in Africa and Asia. The emerging middle class is seen in Chaucer's Host and Franklin and other portraits of common men in *The Prologue*. The Near and Middle East have plenty of their own *Faerie Queene* stuff. But even the glorification of national history in Shakespeare's chronicle plays came as a revelation to Indians a hundred years ago. The England of Queen Anne yields an even more interesting picture. That was the time when the urbanisation of culture that preceded the great Industrial Revolution was taking place. Coffee houses had sprung up in London and men of letters were just emerging from their garrets. I still remember vividly how, as I sat reading in the Bodleian *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, *The Citizen of the World* and *The Rambler* for my tutorials at Oxford twenty-five years ago, this London sprang to life before my very eyes in place of the 20th century London that I had seen. It reminded me of a similar transformation that had come over Indian society. The doings of Sir Roger De Coverley in town are still enacted in every Indian city when a village squire or jagirdar visits it. Our Sir Andrew Freeports are multiplying fast and promoting both the prosperity and the philistinism of the land. When in 1947 the partition of India was in the air and the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League were contending with each other for victory, I won a prize announced

for the best letter of the week by *The Illustrated Weekly of India* by quoting the following lines from Addison's essay on Party Government under the caption "Addison Come to Judgement": "There cannot a greater judgement befall a country than such a dreadful spirit of division as rends a government into two distinct people, and makes them greater strangers and more averse to one another, than if they were actually two different nations. The effects of such a division are pernicious to the last degree, not only with regard to those advantages which they give the common enemy, but to those private evils which they produce in the heart of almost every particular person. This influence is very fatal both to men's morals and their understandings; it sinks the virtue of a nation, and not only so, but destroys even common sense."

Dr. Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield regarding the dedication of his great Dictionary, the glorification of the feudal past in Scott's historical novels and the dissection of pre-industrial middle-class preoccupations in Jane Austen had the warmth and freshness of contemporary life itself for Indians towards the close of the 19th century. The reverberations of labour unrest in Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley* had the poignancy of real life. The revival of folk ballads brought about by Percy's *Reliques* and the folk refrains of Burns' songs had a remarkable impact on Indian literature. A conscious cultivation of the oral literary past gave a new direction to the literature in India. Scholars have been busy for several years collecting proverbs, folk tales, ballads and songs in each part of the country.

Industrial society in the West is now evolving into the Atomic Age and the Age of Space Travel. The literature which reflects these new pressures and problems is sure to interest the Afro-Asian as something that is already in the offing, that may break in on him tomorrow if not today. The entire globe is involved in the repercussions of these tremendous events, and it is stimulating for him to read works like H. G. Wells' *The Shape of Things to Come*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste*

Land, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*.

The impact of great movements of thought on literature is another fascinating aspect of literary study. An examination of major and minor works of art with a view to discovering the way in which a movement of the human spirit permeates the literature of a period is indeed a rewarding experience. The student is thrilled to perceive the consanguinity of outlook that distinguishes the writers of the blossoming period of the Renaissance, its ripeness and decadence. The impact of German transcendentalism — ultimately traceable to Indian thought — which is such a powerful factor in the Romanticism of the early 19th century and the influence of Karl Marx and Freud on recent English literature can be studied with great profit by students in developing countries.

The spiritual evolution of writers like Shakespeare, Shelley and Keats is another interesting branch of literary study. Their rapid transformations of outlook and the material in the form of letters and of critical analyses which facilitates such study can give to the reader a wonderful insight into the formation and evolution of the aesthetic personality. We have in India a great deal of literature about the psychology of Art but not the psychological evolution of individual artists. I would recommend to young students in India with a poetical bent of mind a book like Middleton Murry's *Keats and Shakespeare* more than any book on aesthetics or on principles of criticism. It is rewarding to study how even the evolution of living poets like T. S. Eliot is X-rayed with great interest and fidelity by critics. Our own Tagoreana is growing. But modern English literature can provide us with a rich variety of literary portraits.

But it is good to remember that the psychological approach should usually be supplemented by the socio-logical. I remember an English critic wondering whether Irish poets like W. B. Yeats and A. E. wore any clothes at all, — their early poetry was so ethereal

and so full of angelic wings. Had the critic been acquainted with them, he would have realised that it is possible to dress oneself and eat one's breakfast and hear the sound of angel's wings at the same time. On the eve of my departure from Poona to Oxford, at a farewell meeting, I spoke so feelingly about my desire to bring home with me a handful of dust from Shelley's birthplace that a young friend of mine actually presented to me a fine casket in which to treasure this handful of dust. But other influences prevailed on me when I set my foot on English soil. I realised that the political and industrial glory of England was at least as great as the glory of Shelley's poetry. I felt that the primary duty of an Indian then was, not to bother about a handful of dust from the birthplaces of poets but to lend a helping hand to free his mother-country from an alien yoke. I returned home with an empty casket and lectured to my friend on the need to industrialise India. Having lived in England for some time I learnt to appreciate Dryden and Pope, whose poetry I abhorred. When I visited England for the first time after India had attained independence, I fulfilled my long cherished dream of visiting Shelley's birthplace.

2

I have dealt at length with the modernising influence that a study of English literature has exercised overseas. But this does not mean that one has to subscribe to the theory of 'excess' put forward by Dr. Holloway. The 'excess' that he speaks of is not, after all, the 'fine excess' that Drayton wrote about. It makes our approach to literature utilitarian in the extreme and leaves out those "brave, translunary things" which constitute the essence of literature. Literature is as much an expression of Universal Man, of 'eternal verities', as it is of the manifold stages in the life of a society or nation. To the soul-gaze of man, when he stands face to face with Reality, the earth is Adam's paradise, hell or heaven and not England or India,

Egypt or Lebanon. It is the theatre set for the evolution of the individual, of humanity, through the ages. It is, as Keats said, the vale of soul-making. We go to English Literature because it is a great literature, because it offers to us for study some of the great classics of the world's literature. We have our own treasure of many ancient and some modern classics. But English literature has a variety of modern world classics,—works which concentrate on the fundamental problems of human life in a modern or contemporary manner: Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*; Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*; Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*; Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*; Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*; Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*; Hardy's *Two on a Tower* and *Tess*; Galsworthy's *The Man of Property*; Conrad's *Victory*; Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*; Bernard Shaw's *St. Joan*; Barrie's *Peter Pan* and T. S. Eliot's *The Four Quartets* — to mention only a few that come casually to my mind. These and other works put us in touch with some of the choicest things of the human spirit. We love them because they throw open a window through which we are privileged to see the drama of man's eternal passion, eternal pain and eternal delight. In this sense English literature ceases to be English. It is simply literature which enables us to scale some of the highest heights and dive into some of the deepest depths of the human spirit. One can enjoy a masterpiece like *Macbeth* without knowing anything about medieval Scotland. Very little of the background material that I have dealt with in this chapter is necessary for understanding many great poems, plays and novels, since it is their universality which is the greater part of their value. What does need to be explained about them should be done simply, without the assumptions of an English cultural background, and in a way which is unobtrusive and treats the text as the major point of interest. This approach should be the primary approach of a non-British student to English literature. He should realise and enjoy the universality of re-

ference before he begins to tackle the local particulars of a civilisation.

Dr. Holloway's statement about the study of English literature by students overseas does not do justice to this universality of reference that characterises a literature. I also think that his formulation of the utilitarian values of the study of a foreign literature itself needs to be modified. As a friend pointed out to me in this connection, any worthwhile evolution in a nation is surely spontaneous. The observation of some other nation's cultural evolution cannot do much to further one's own except by encouraging writers to try out other people's literary genies in their own languages or by facilitating a study of their own evolution by a study of some other well-recorded evolution. In spite of all that I have said so far about the sociological impact of English literature on the non-British student, it is easy to see that, if our primary aim is to study the conditions of life, at a utilitarian level, of a Western nation, this can be done best from films and newspapers, not in 'literature'. So little of modern English fiction seems to have any point of reference to the generality of the nation. Dr. Holloway thinks that the process of knowing what a modern 'westernised' community is like is secured, not merely by the content of literary works but by getting to know how society received it. But we do not go to literature for a knowledge of modern 'western' society. This would make it impossible for us to distinguish literature from films and newspapers. Society generally lags behind the teachings of its prophets, even if it does not stone them while they are alive. The message of Shakespeare in *The Tempest* cannot be obscured by any number of world wars, unless *The Tempest* itself is destroyed along with its readers and the world into which it was born. We go to literature for the total impact that it has on our being and becoming and not for the additions that it makes to our knowledge of sociology and anthropology.

It has been already mentioned that the interchange of

literary experience and values is not one-sided. English literature brought to the Afro-Asian an impact which facilitated the modernisation of his own literature. But the Asian literatures have also exercised a significant influence on the West from very early times. If Arabic gave Europe her form of the sonnet, the beast fables of La Fontaine and other writers were ultimately derived from India. More than in the field of literary genres, the Asian influence is active in another aspect of literature, — its universality of appeal, its delineation of the imperishable quality of the human spirit. It has added a new measure of depth to English literature. It cannot be denied that this was the kind of influence that Indian thought had on the German transcendentalists and on Coleridge, Shelley and Keats through them. It would not perhaps be quite relevant to refer here to Emerson, Thoreau and Walt Whitman. But one has only to read A.E, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot and Aldous Huxley to realise how the Indian impact is shaping, in an increasing measure, this aspect of English literature, — its presentation of the complexities, the depths and heights of the human spirit. If a study of English literature helped to modernise Afro-Asian writing, the Afro-Asian impact has been steadily influencing the depth and universality of English literature. It would be somewhat crude in this context to speak of the 'something in excess' that a study of English literature offers to Afro-Asian students. There is no one-way traffic on the high roads of literature.

I would therefore redefine the utilitarian values of the study of foreign literature. I am indebted to a friend for a part of this statement:

- (1) A widening and deepening of skills in the language.
- (2) A deeper understanding of the people who produce this literature, not so that emulation can take place but so that there can grow up some mutual trust, regard, respect...and hence some peaceful co-existence. This is what has come

from many decades of good English literary study in India. The bad aspect was the uncritical swallowing of the West as it was evolving.

- (3) The classification into three groups⁵ of the countries in which English literature is studied helps us in literary study only from one view-point, — the evolutionary or sociological. This cannot be regarded as the primary approach to a foreign literature. It also obscures the fact that there is a mutual interchange of experience and literary values. The primary approach is from the stand-point of its universality of reference. This should be placed at the very centre when defining the values of the study of a foreign literature.
- (4) As for guiding and expanding local demand overseas, the demand is always guided by the inner attraction that a people experience towards English literature. But the attraction itself can be deepened or illumined in a number of ways through participation in a conference.

The study of a foreign literature enables a people to understand the soul of another and add to its own intensity of perception and extensiveness of experience. It is an incentive to a nation's own self-exploration and evolution. When one nation falls away from its height into a state of exhaustion and repose, another makes that nation aware of itself and inspires it to pursue new lines of its own evolution. When a nation climbs the giddy heights of the cosmic whirl and is about to lose its balance and fall, another awakens it to the wisdom of the voice that is heard in the depths of its own silence. This is the give and take which enriches the life of humanity. This interchange is ceaselessly active through the centuries and to overlook the past and future and think only of a fraction of the present is to take an extremely limited and partial view of the matter. It is this mutual enrichment that justifies all the seven approaches, outlined in this chapter, to a foreign litera-

⁵ Western, Asian and African countries.

ture. It is in the light of these assumptions about the study of a foreign literature that the study of English literature overseas has to be examined by us.

3

The overseas student needs to supplement his approach to English literature by a study of several allied or auxiliary disciplines. He cannot afford to ignore the writings of Aristotle, Dryden, Dr. Johnson, Coleridge, Matthew Arnold, Pater, Yeats, I. A. Richards, T. S. Eliot, Herbert Read and other modern critics. The various critical approaches referred to in the preceding paragraphs, comparative criticism, a study of imagery and craftsmanship, — all these are of great interest to the overseas student. An integration of all these approaches and their application in terms of critical evaluation to individual writers and works of art deserves to be cultivated more than ever before. A few others may also be mentioned in this connection:

- (1) The prosodic analysis of a poet's work or the history of a form like blank verse, the sonnet or free verse.
- (2) A description of modern or contemporary English usage.
- (3) Philology: the history of the English language.
- (4) Textual criticism.

The English language introduces the overseas student to another literature, — American literature. Until we have our own translations of world classics in our languages in large numbers, we shall also have to study Greek, Roman, French, German, Italian and Scandinavian classics in English translation for purposes of comparative criticism. Nor can we afford to neglect Anglo-Indian, Indo-Anglian and Indo-English literature. It has a special significance for Indian students.

Suggestions have been made in the preceding paragraphs towards revision of overseas objectives in con-

nection with literary study. Our different categories of work in English literature will have to be redefined if this analysis is acceptable. We shall, in particular, have to be guided by the following considerations:

- (1) Modern English literature from the age of Elizabeth onwards will arouse more interest than the literature of the earlier periods. These latter can be selected by a post-graduate student for study if he so desires.
- (2) The linguistic equipment of the student should be considered when one is prescribing a course of readings for him in English literature. For example, the pupil in the non-English medium school can only be given simplified summaries of the plots of great novels. Nor can a Shakespeare play be prescribed for the compulsory English course for the first Degree.
- (3) At various stages of the study of English as a second language, the student should be introduced to different varieties of language,— narrative, dramatic, scientific, discursive, etc. It is only in the optional under-graduate courses in English that the aesthetic approach should be encouraged. Literary criticism may be introduced at the advanced optional stage. Courses of study in the allied disciplines should be distributed between the special courses for the first and second degree and the research degree.
- (4) The student's knowledge of the background of English literature should be taken into account. Thus the texts for non-English medium schools in India should have reading matter partly of Anglo-Indian or Indo-Anglian origin and partly of English origin, but not burdened with local particularities. The First Degree student should be enabled to approach literature mainly from the linguistic, aesthetic, psychological and evaluatory angles. He can take up the historical, sociological and philosophic approaches at the post-graduate

- stage.
- (5) World classics in English would naturally be the books for adult reading, the approach being mainly psychological.
 - (6) A content course in English literature for teacher trainers, at least in India, should consist of recent English literature and an elucidation of the general principles of aesthetics. Early modern English literature can be prescribed for study when the present syllabuses for university courses include more of modern literature.

XIV

RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN OUR UNIVERSITIES

OUR RESEARCH degree in English language and literature needs some consideration. English literature has been an intercontinental subject of study and an over-tapped area for research, with the result that research students in our universities frequently spend their years on preparing theses which are hardly anything more than a collection of available critical dicta and a contribution, not to knowledge, but to a whole heap of type-scripts piled up in a university library.

I do not deny that research work is a good discipline and is valuable, to some extent, for its own sake, irrespective of the results achieved. The student gets familiar with research techniques and procedures which are sure to bear fruit when he lights upon a truly significant theme. This is the objective aimed at by the M.A. Hons. and M. Litt. degrees of some universities. Students work on some topics, which do not necessarily call for originality. It will suffice if they give evidence of their capacity to carry on research work on right lines.

But I believe that this objective can be realised by prescribing for candidates a preliminary course in Bibliography, History of Scholarship and ancillary studies, and also one or two course units in English language and literature which they have not studied before. This can extend over a year, with a test at the end of the year. Training in the use of manuscripts is recommended sometimes for this preliminary course. But we cannot think of working on any English manuscripts in India, unless we think of micro-film copies.

or Indo-Anglian manuscripts. This study can also form part of the course.

Once a student equips himself in this way, what topics will he work upon? A desire for promotion is a legitimate motive and it is only by harnessing legitimate self-interest that Research or Scholarship can achieve a perceptible advance. But this does not mean that the significance of the research done should be compromised in any way.

It is still possible, when almost every nook and corner of English literature has been exhausted and almost every creative writer in English is aware of a host of research workers ready to pounce upon him before he has hardly begun to write, to arrive at new points of view and to document them in detail. Our Ph. D. theses, based on critical interpretations of writers, forms or periods, tend to be collations of various critical points of view rather than original interpretations. Not that original work is impossible. Writings like those of Dr. Narayana Menon, Professors Sen Gupta and Guha and Shri. Nolini Kant Gupta (*Poets and Mystics*) show that it is possible to think originally on critical problems, some of which have been touchstones of critical insight for several centuries. It is not only possible, but inevitable that there should grow up, in course of time, an Indian school of literary criticism, as applied to English literature, just as there is a French school or German school. *The Future Poetry* by Sri Aurobindo, seems to me to be a very significant contribution from this point of view, a far more fundamental survey of English poetry than that by Taine or Legouis and Cazamian. But one has to realise that it is given only to a few to sense a new interpretation and to develop it cogently.

It is suggested sometimes that a study of the influence of the literature in Greek, Latin, French, Italian or German, on English literature, is a good field for research. I am not so sure that this is a fruitful field for our research students. We should, as students of English literature, try and learn, if possible, a language like

Latin, French or Italian to have a first-hand knowledge of the influences of English literature. It adds to our delight and strengthens our standing as teachers of English. But to master both English and another language like French or Italian and conduct research on some kind of influence about which neither a Britisher (or an American or member of the English-speaking commonwealth countries) nor a Frenchman (or Italian) has said anything as yet is, to my mind, a desperate task and an unnecessary one at that. I quite realise that parochialism in the world of letters and scholarship is highly objectionable. I greatly admire the English, German and American scholars who devoted their lifetime to a study of Sanskrit, Pali, Tamil and other Indian languages and wrote about them as if they were born to the languages. We can emulate them with regard to European languages if we are ourselves sufficiently advanced and have an adequate number of research workers in fields which are more important from a national point of view. Otherwise we shall not be justified in thinking of this field for research in our universities.

As for the study of English classics in relation to other departments of knowledge, such as philosophy, sociology and anthropology, I cannot quite see whether there is any ground to be covered at all. There are encyclopaedic studies of the cultural, social, political and philosophic environment of this literature, — volumes in which whole periods and sub-periods of English literary history lie analysed and embalmed. I agree that it is possible for a research student in the United Kingdom or elsewhere to strike a new line of thought in these matters with the help of extensive libraries and all possible periodical literature, as Dr. Rajan has done in his work on Milton. But shall we think of work of this kind as part of the plan for research in our universities? For one thing, it may not be practicable to undertake such work in our universities. For another, it may be unnecessary; or, rather, it may be wiser to leave it to the numerous research enthusiasts

swarming in the universities of the other countries I spoke of.

Another area of research mentioned sometimes is the impact of English literature on the literatures in our own languages. I do not know whether this has been accepted in any of our universities as a part of English literary studies. Investigation in this field will, I think, be amply rewarded. But it is no use presenting a medley of information on the subject. It would be fruitful to have monographs on the influence of an individual author, form or period; or even a style or metrical feature. It would be interesting to read, for instance, what impact the English historical novel had on Bengali or Tamil. Scott, Blackmore, Disraeli, Thackeray, Ainsworth, George Eliot, Maurice Hewlett, — who were the English writers that influenced the growth of the historical novel in Bengali or Tamil? Which features of their substance, technique or method appealed to the imagination of our writers? Was the historical novel in Bengali a close imitation of English models or a free adaptation? What are the parallelisms and similarities? Did it develop a vitality of its own? What are the new features? All these questions can be tackled either from the English or from the Indian side. I am familiar with work done under the departments of some of our languages and literatures, in which the emphasis is placed on a survey of our own literary activity. But it would be worthwhile investigating in this field from the English end and finding out whether the impact was central or spent itself in by-paths. An inquiry of this kind is sure to stimulate further creative activity.

Monographs of this kind can be prepared on the influence of individual authors, like Shakespeare, Keats, Shaw or T. S. Eliot; on lyric forms like the sonnet or the ode; and on rhythm patterns like blank verse or free verse.

A comparative study of English literature with one of our own literatures, especially in their earlier stages, can also be a useful, though limited, field. For instance,

the *champu* epic in the South Indian languages, which is composed in diverse metres and in poetic prose, has special features of its own. It departs from the Sanskrit tradition in some significant ways. It would be interesting to compare it with the Western epic tradition. Again, we speak of some of our own poets as the Chaucer of Kannada poetry, the Milton of Telugu poetry or the Pope of Gujarathi poetry. It would be desirable to test these impressions through careful study and see what measure of truth they contain.

A study of the influence of Indian myth and legend, topography, history and thought on English literature is also an important field. It should be possible to have interesting dissertations on topics like "The Moghuls in English literature", "The impact of Buddhistic thought on English men of letters", "The doctrines of Karma and Maya in English literature", "The legend of Kama in English literature" and so on.

A study of Anglo-Indian and Indo-Anglian literature has yielded and is yielding fruitful results, especially in its Anglo-Indian sector. But we still seem to suffer from some inhibitions with regard to Indo-Anglian writing. Our research guides and students are naturally enthusiastic about writing on C. Day Lewis, Orwell or Edwin Muir. But they somehow feel that it is not respectable enough to write on G. K. Gokhale, Srinivasa Sastri, Romesh Chander Dutt, Swami Vivekanand, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya or Srimati Sarojini Naidu. Our Independence has not yet freed us from these taboos. I am glad that Louisiana State University, U. S. A. has accepted a thesis on the novels of Shri R. K. Narayan by an Indian student. After all we have to remember that if our relatives are poor, they are still our relatives and culture and courtesy require that we should own them. It is for us to study the Indo-Anglian writers who have done significant work and make the English-speaking world realise that they are well worth reading. The writings of our men of letters like Gokhale and Srinivasa Sastri have not even been edited properly as yet and made

easily accessible to the Indian reading public.

Nor need we think that Indo-Anglian writing has no great names shedding lustre on it. The humanistic writings of Pandit Nehru and the philosophic writings of Dr S Radhakrishnan are read with admiration the world over. To read what C G M Joad says about Dr. Radhakrishnan in his *The Counter-attack from the East* is an exciting experience. Sir Francis Younghusband hailed Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine* as one of the greatest books of the century and Sir Herbert Read remarked regarding *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo's epic: "It is a remarkable achievement by any standard and I am full of amazement that someone not of English origin should have such a wonderful command not only of our language as such, but of its skillful elaboration into poetic diction of such high quality." Indo-Anglian fiction has an ever growing public and some of it — the novels of Shri R K Narayan and Shri Mulk Raj Anand, for example — has been translated into several foreign languages. Indo-Anglian literature has indeed been made a subject of study in some of the universities in Great Britain and the United States. That, I suppose, is a good test of respectability. We need not hesitate to recognise the worth of what is our own, especially when others have been enthusiastic about it.

The fact is that the history of Indo-Anglian writing has to be invested with living significance by editing the work of earlier writers. Representative anthologies, both of Indo-Anglian verse and prose, have to be made available to the public with a critical assessment of each writer. One has to be grateful to Dr K R Srinivasa Iyengar and to the late Professor Bhushan for their contributions in this field of study.

A comparative study of Indian and European aesthetics is another interesting area of investigation. But good work in this field demands such a wide range of scholarship and language study that it can only be taken up by established research workers. Once the

¹ In a letter to Shri A Purani, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry,

broad outlines have been laid down, research students can, with advantage, work on individual topics. Nothing is easier than to collect a number of sporadic statements from Plato, Aristotle, Dr. Johnson, Arnold and Bradley and compare them with similar statements from Bharata, Anandavardhana, Mammata and other Sanskrit aestheticians. Nothing also is more difficult than to investigate the fundamentals of the two traditions and set forth against that background a comparative study of Bharata and Aristotle, of Coleridge and Abhinavagupta.

We have concerned ourselves so far with literary research. But the English language has influenced our languages just as English literature has had a shaping influence on our literatures. It is, in a way, more difficult to do original research work on developments in the English language itself, especially because we have no tradition in this field. But nothing is impossible. I know of a science graduate who took the Ph. D. Degree in English in one of our universities by writing a thesis on prepositional and idiomatic phrases evolved in 20th century English writing and not recorded in the N. E. D.

But it is possible and desirable to study English as spoken and written in India. Professor G. C. Bannerjee pointed out at the Baroda Conference that the English spoken by a community, — the Anglo-Indians in India — was a fine subject for monograph. We all await with interest, in fact, monographs on the peculiarities of English as spoken and written in each one of our regions. A fine thesis can be prepared on 'English as spoken and written in Kerala' or on Bombay English. I may be pardoned if I say that a thesis of this kind will even be of some immediate value, as compared with a thesis on 'Archaisms in Spenser'. It will tell us what pitfalls there are in the use of English in each region and how to avoid them. It will even be writing of international importance, for it will be an authoritative exposition of the use of English in one part of the world and thus add substantially to the knowledge of

any student of the English language. The public in India will be grateful for such a study for, since we have to use English, — both written and spoken — for some time, it is in our interest to know the pitfalls we ought to avoid.

Some work has already been done on Indian loan-words in English. A thesis giving the literary contexts in which these words are found in English will make fascinating reading. Equally interesting and even more useful will be theses on the English words which have been acclimatised in each one of our languages. These will give the essential English vocabulary on which we may build up new sets of Primers and Readers for use in secondary schools in each linguistic region. The most effective way of teaching English words to a child would naturally be to begin with words which are already acclimatised in the language of the child. It ensures a natural transition from the mother-tongue to English.

Studies in the projection of native idioms into written and spoken English in each region will also help to concentrate on these weak spots in a child's grasp of English, by introducing him to relevant English usage at an early stage and enabling him to avoid these lapses into local usage while speaking or writing English. A comparison of the structures of English with those in each Indian language will enable us to introduce the child to English through structures which are common to both the languages and eliminate, through drill and repetition, the possibility of his projection of non-English structures into English. New Primers and Readers will have to be devised specifically for each linguistic region if this objective is to be achieved. With a little linguistic training, our research students can take up this work and help to raise the standard of English in the country by making the required teaching material available.

Studies in comparative phonetics will help us to locate the sounds which are new to the child in English as compared with his mother-tongue. The teacher can

then specially concentrate on these sounds and see that the child masters them at an early stage.

Research, then, on Comparative Vocabulary, Idiom, Structure and Phonetics is work of immediate significance and it is just this area we have ignored for a long time.

There is another area of research — that of the methodology of teaching English. Several theses have been submitted in this line for the M. Ed. and Ph. D. degrees of universities. But it is somehow felt that these are not in the academic but in the professional line and collegiate teachers of English do not know much about them. There is also another reason for this. The theses are mostly concerned with problems at the secondary level and they do not therefore, attract collegiate attention. Needless to say, the collegiate teaching of English is vitally affected by what is done at school. The methodology of collegiate teaching, — an examination of the objectives, curricula, teaching methods, teaching materials and evaluation procedures followed in colleges — is a science brilliantly developed in the U.S.A. But it is only recently that a beginning in this direction has been made in our country. The sooner it comes into its own in our universities, the better for them and for all concerned.

A great deal of work has to be done on these lines. I give herewith an idea of the problems involved:

- (1) An examination of the objectives of teaching English at different levels. Patient work on our university handbooks which lay down curricula for different courses is sure to reveal the paucity of our thinking in this field and lead to a great deal of clarity.
- (2) An examination of the curricula themselves from the point of view of the objectives we have in view.
- (3) Surveys of the methods we employ in the teaching of English in our colleges and the way in which they are related to our objectives and

curricula.

- (4) Surveys of the textbooks we prescribe at different levels in our universities and the extent to which they are capable of fulfilling the objectives we have in view.
- (5) Surveys of the examination techniques we employ and the extent to which they test the achievement of objectives.
- (6) Statistical surveys of student performance in examinations, based on a scrutiny of answer-scripts, specifying the qualities that distinguish a third, second or first class score in our universities.
- (7) A thesis on the standing of English Honours graduates of a university in their subject, — the extent of their knowledge and progress, based on personal interviews.
- (8) Reports or monographs on new methods or experiments in tutorials and the system of admissions and their repercussions on the teaching of English, with full details.
- (9) The validity of English as a medium of instruction and examination in different subjects.

It is possible that, for some of the topics suggested above for research, the student will have to possess an intimate knowledge of Indian literature. Students who have an aptitude for Comparative Aesthetics or Comparative Literature will do well to take up one or two course units in Sanskrit or in a modern Indian language for their B. A. or M. A. examination. The co-operation of the departments of these languages will be increasingly essential for students as well as teachers of English. Topics may be selected for research which will necessitate the appointment of the heads of these departments as joint supervisors. There has to be a great deal of flexibility in the selection of topics for research as well as in the procedures adopted for supervision and evaluation.

PART IV

INDO-ANGLIAN AND INDO-ENGLISH WRITING

XV

INDIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

I SHOULD like to pose another question here, one which, I feel, should take its chance with the academic world. Should not the creative translation of an Indian classic, edited with a critical introduction bringing out its milieu and its literary significance, be considered a contribution meriting the Ph. D. degree in English?

I shall explain the need for such a proposal. Indian literature has a great tradition in each one of our languages, reaching back to a thousand years and more. There are a number of masterpieces in each one of these languages. They are locked-up treasures to readers who do not know the language in which they are considerably enriched if these are available in translation for all to read. The world outside, which imagines that India is a multilingual country, in which the slender sense of unity is lost in a bewildering diversity, will also realise the essential principle of unity that runs through all the literatures if these works are available in translation. The unity of Indian literature will be consolidation.

Who, then, will undertake this work? The Sahitya Akademi has chalked out a programme of translation. But the Akademi has numerous projects before it and this is only one of them.

It would be far different if our universities were interested in a programme of this kind. Each linguistic region has its own universities today, which are the custodians and promoters of its culture. They can come together and draw up a list of works which deserve to be translated into English.

Who will undertake to translate these works into English? Work of this kind requires enthusiasm as well

as mature experience. A research student and a research supervisor can bring these qualities to the work, should they jointly decide to take it up.

It is obvious that only the student who has specialised in English language and literature is capable of such a task. Many Sanskrit plays, poems, and prose works have been translated into Sanskritised English, by several professors of Sanskrit. It is only the student who has specialised in English and has studied Sanskrit or a modern Indian language well that can do justice to such work.

What kind of Indian classics do we have in view when we think of translation? There is considerable scope for choice in this field. There are epic compositions, based on ancient myth and legend, presenting a sustained allegory of the political history of the times in which the poets lived or a panorama of social life, — like the *Mahabharata* of Nannaya in Telugu, Pampa in Kannada and Saraladas in Oriya or the *Ramayana* of Kamban in Tamil. There is didactic or philosophic poetry like the *Kural* in Tamil or *Viveka Sindhu* in Marathi. There are the secular *champu* epics like the *sandesha* poems in Malayalam. Then there are the devotional lyrics of great poets, — Narsi Mehta in Gujarati, Tukaram in Marathi, Kabir and Tulsi Das in Hindi, Sankaradeva in Assamese, the *vachanakara* and *dasa* schools in Kannada and Chaitanya in Bengali. There are poetic biographies of saints in all the languages by biographers like Premanand in Gujarathi, Nabhadas in Hindi, Saraswati Gangadhar in Marathi, Harihara in Kannada and Krishnadevaraya in Telugu. There are *prabandhas* in prose or verse, dealing with contemporary political themes like *Kanhadade Prabhanda* in Gujarathi, *powadas* in Marathi, *Chikadevaraja Vamshavali* in Kannada, *Chatraprakash* in Hindi, *Palnati Viracharitram* in Telugu and *Padappathee* in Malayalam. There is considerable literature reflecting the attempt at synthesising Hinduism and Islam, especially in the North Indian languages. Satirical and neo-classical poetry was composed in all these languages.

towards the end of the medieval period.

I have not dealt, in this connection, with modern Indian literature. That is because it is dangerous to speculate who, among living authors, is a classic and who is not. But recent Indian writing, like that of Premchand, Sharatchandra Chatterjee, Vallathol, Bharati and M. S. Puttanna can very well lend itself to translation.

The next question is one of relevance. We may agree that translation on these lines is work of national importance, but question the propriety of promoting this activity under post-graduate research in a university department of English. I have already discussed the scope for research work in the field of English studies under the broad headings of literature, language and pedagogy. The last two are comparatively new areas. Similarly, it is only in Indo-Anglian literature and in the areas of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics that there is any scope left for meaningful research in English in our universities. This proposal is, in a way, an extension of the work that can be done in Comparative Literature, — in the Indo-English section of it.

But how can this be regarded as research work? It may not be research. But it is most certainly a significant contribution to knowledge, — which a considerable part of the research work carried on at present under our English departments is not. We have also to remember that the critical abilities which are called forth by any genuine piece of research in English are inevitably involved in an activity of this kind. Wide scholarship is needed on the part of the student to select for translation a work in Sanskrit or in a modern Indian language which bears translation and deserves the honour. All this critical insight and capacity for organisation of material is tested in his introduction to the work, — explaining its milieu, placing it in its proper context in world literature, evaluating the tradition to which it belongs in its own literary setting and assessing its intrinsic qualities of form and substance. It may be objected that all this will have to be

done with regard to a literature other than English. But there are two facts which, if they are given careful consideration, are sure to invalidate this objection. One is that the critical judgement which the student is called upon to exercise is preeminently the product of his training as a student of English literature. A synthesis of the Indian and European traditions in literary criticism has yet to be realised in all its particulars, though a general outline of it has emerged in the pronouncements of Tagore and especially of Sri Aurobindo. The students and teachers of English literature were the pioneers of the Indian literary renaissance precisely because the students and professors of the Indian languages wandered in the maze of an antiquated rhetoric and lost their way, being incapable of sensing the quickening influences around them. I would say that a recognition of this fact should enable us to regard the critical introduction I spoke of as the *legitimate* concern of an *Indian* student of English literature.

Another is that the work of translation brings into play the creative abilities of the student as well. *This is even more relevant because, if the translation is successful, it is an achievement of creative expression in English. One does not expect every research student to be an incipient poet or novelist. But it is expected that only students with a creative as well as critical turn of mind will choose to work in this field. There are courses in creative expression in several leading American universities and creative work is, in some cases, accepted as legitimate work in lieu of one or two course units. One can translate prose romances, novels, plays, essays and travelogues, if not poetry. Even moderate success in translation will mean a significant contribution to the library of world literature in English.

All that I contend is that, along with other areas of research work, it should be open to an advanced student of English language and literature to place his critical and creative abilities at the service of such an enterprise and look for suitable recognition from his university. This may not be Research in the strict

sense. But it is Restoration,— the restoration of a classic to the level of recognition at which it would have easily stood but for the barriers of language. This is as much a contribution to knowledge as any piece of laudable research. The Ph. D. degree in English takes into account at present a wide variety of work, — work on English, American, Anglo-Indian and Indo-Anglian literature. It awaits work on language and in pedagogy. This is only a plea to extend its application to creative and critical work done in the Indo-English sector.

XVI

INDO-ANGLIAN AND INDO-ENGLISH LITERATURE

We now come to the question of Indo-English literature. The term ‘Indo Anglian’ has been coined as a kind of cousin to “Anglo Indian.” It has done duty in this capacity for some time and there is no reason to disturb it. There is a growing need for another related term and I wish to make use of the term “Indo-English” for this purpose.

There is a need today to distinguish between two kinds of Indian writing in English,—books which have been originally written in English and others which are translations into English of books published in one of the classical or modern Indian languages. This latter was not a very significant category some years ago and it was subsumed without any feeling of incongruity under the title “Indo-Anglian.”

There are five categories of writing in this field which have to be distinguished from each other

(1) There are books written by English men of letters on India or on Indian themes,—like *The Curse of Kehama* by Robert Southey, *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins or *The Jungle Book* by Kipling. Writers like Macaulay and Winston Churchill lived in India for some time and they have written on Indian affairs. These writings are a part of the main stream of English literature and they have to be evaluated as such, though they may have a special interest for the Indian reader.

(2) There are translations by English writers of Indian classics into English. Englishmen began to take interest in Indian literature towards the close of the

18th century. Sir William Jones translated Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*. There is another translation of the same play by A. W. Ryder, who also translated *Dashakumara charitam* and *Panchatantra* into English. Writings of this kind can be regarded as part of the main stream. They naturally arouse special interest in the Indian reader. There are also a few translations like *Ten Upanishads* and Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras* by W. B. Yeats and Purohit Swami, where it is difficult to press this distinction any further, without subscribing to the method of Polonius. But, generally speaking, the distinction holds good.

(3) Then there are books written on Indian themes by Englishmen who lived in India and made India their primary inspiration. These writers are known exclusively for their books about India. One can think, in this connection, of writers like Meadows Taylor, Sir Edwin Arnold and F. W. Bain. These are the 'Anglo-Indian' writers. Some of their work survives by its intrinsic excellence. But 'Anglo-Indian' fiction throws an interesting, though sometimes distorted, light on the social scene in India in the 18th and early 19th century, the very period when Indian literature was somewhat arrested in its growth. It deserves to be studied as an appendix to our own literature of that period.

(4) 'Indo-Anglian' literature comprises the work of Indian writers in English. English is used here either as the literary *lingua franca* of India or as a world language. Indo-Anglian literature has had an illustrious history and it includes many literary forms, — from the epic to the personal essay.

(5) What I would call 'Indo-English' literature consists of translations by Indians from Indian literature into English. The aim here is 'to present in English, work of recognised merit done in one of the Indian languages. The translator is an interpreter, choosing the best in his own language and rendering it into English for the benefit of the English-knowing public. Even a few works that are regarded as 'Indo-Anglian' today, —

like R. C. Dutt's *Ramayana* — belong to this category. Tagore's *Gitanjali* — the only Asian book which has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature — is a contribution, not to Indo-Anglian, but to Indo-English.

This is a growing department of Indian writing, — especially now that modern Indian literature has a re-nascent tradition of well over a century. A systematic attempt has, in fact, to be made to develop this writing in order to promote a knowledge of Indian thought and vision abroad.

How does Indo-Anglian writing compare with Indo-English? A distinction seems to be both possible and necessary here. Indo-Anglian writing is direct and spontaneous, — like creative writing in any other language. It is conditioned in many ways by the peculiar circumstances of its birth and growth. As Dr. Srinivasa Iyengar has observed in his interesting brochure on "The Study of Indian Writing in English", "it has to negotiate an uneasy passage between the Indian's diffidence and the Englishman's indifference". Gordon Bottomley is said to have described typical Indo-Anglian poetry as "Matthew Arnold in a *sari*". He should rather have referred to it as *Shakuntala in skirts*. Where Indo-Anglian writing very nearly approximates to English writing in its accent, tone, vocabulary, syntax and style, by reason of the writer's interest or domicile, it also tends to lose, to that extent, Indianness of thought and vision. Our Indo-Anglians, who are fond of cosmopolitan living, have plenty of the flavour of conversational English in their writings. The latest fashions in language, which they assimilate and employ in their writing, make them more 'Anglian', than 'Indian'. They tend to write about India from the outside rather than inside. On the other hand, the Indo-Anglians who are true to Indian thought and vision cannot escape the Indian flavour even when they write in English. Their style is, in a great measure, conditioned by the learned vocabulary of the subject on which they write, — philosophy, sociology, literary criticism and the like. Even when they write fiction, they depend, for their

effect, on picturesque Indian phrases and their equivalents in English. When it comes to writing poetry, they are invariably reminiscential in their style and phrasing. We know, as we read, that the writer is conforming, consciously or unconsciously, to the Romantic, Victorian, Georgian or Modernist tradition. If it is a literary giant like Sri Aurobindo at work, we see all this reminiscence being pressed into service for laying a bridge to make an intensely Indian experience or vision, communicable in English. There is a hint of artifice about such great language which resembles the un-English English of Milton, contrasting strangely with the simple lyric effusions of a Suckling or Lovelace. The high seriousness of the substance demands such a style and vindicates it.

One can therefore say that Indo-Anglian writing branches off in two directions. It is either predominantly 'Anglian' or 'Indian'. Very rarely is a synthesis of the two perceptible in sustained works of art. This does not mean that Indo-Anglian writers who are predominantly 'Indian', are all victims and not masters of style. But it is the mastery of a style which is peculiarly Indo-Anglian.

The difficulties of Indo-English literature are of a different kind. Indo-English literature holds up the mirror to recognised works of art in the Indian languages. The Indo-English writer does not 'lisp' in English, like the Indo-Anglian. He uses the English language for communication rather than self-expression. He is more a translator and interpreter than a creator and composer. He may be a creative writer in his own right. He may have achieved self-expression bilingually, — in his own mother-tongue as well as in English. But his work as an Indo-English writer calls for criteria somewhat different from those that are applicable to an Indo-Anglian writer.

To begin with, the Indo-English writer has some positive advantages. For one thing he can be regarded as more representative of India than his Indo-Anglian brother. The book that he translates has been written

primarily for an Indian reading public. It has been delivered naturally to the world and not through a Caesarian operation, like Indo-Anglian writing. It has grown in its own environment and blossomed there, oblivious of the larger world which may or may not be interested in it. Secondly, the book has gone through the usual grind of criticism and reviewing and stood the test. Its excellence has been recognised and that is why it attracts the attention of a translator. This is its distinctive advantage over Indo-Anglian writing. Indo-Anglian writing, like all other, has to begin in the wilderness. It has to win its way slowly upwards, if at all. It cannot be said that Indo-Anglian writing gives a fair sampling of Indian literature, or that our Indo-Anglian poets, novelists or playwrights are among the best that India has produced. The accident of proficiency in a foreign tongue need not necessarily be accompanied by first rate creative capacity. In fact, we know that a good deal of Indo-Anglian fiction or poetry falls short of the level that our greatest writers have touched in their own languages. The Indo-Anglian writers come from a microscopic minority group. Indian writers are a republic of letters by themselves. The Indo-Anglian tends to write with an eye on an outlandish reading public and picks up themes and situations that might appeal to the West. The Indo-English writer, on the other hand, is concerned with a book that is redolent of the soil. It deals with problems that are our problems and in the manner in which we expect our writers to present and to interpret them to us. There is a fundamental difference in the approach. I am tempted to say, in fact, that Indo-Anglian literature is a hothouse plant rather than one that has sprung from the soil and sprouted and burgeoned in the open air.

The handicaps of the Indo-English writer are, on the other hand, equally grave. He does not have a firm hold on the language, as his Indo-Anglian brother has, unless he happens to be an Indo-Anglian himself. There is a very thin line in diction that divides the sublime from the ridiculous. This line disappears fre-

quently in the work of Indo-English writers. They make a blundering kind of melody when they write verse. They invert their prose in order to make it verse and divert their verse in order to turn it into prose. They are often literal in their translation, when literalness leads to banality. They either eschew colour altogether or lay it thickly on the canvas. They are not always happy in the choice of their original. They choose either stories which are strangled with too many local particulars in English or poems which accelerate in the void. Thus they achieve an effect in English which is quite other than what the original writing would have offered to the reader.

It is a matter of great importance that Indian literature should be represented abroad by modern classics translated effectively into English. One thinks of Tagore's *Gitanjali* and *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran of Lebanon, which have attracted reading publics in all parts of the world. It would be desirable even for our Indo-Anglian writers to spare some of their time for achievement in the Indo-English field. This is a task which devolves entirely on students of English language and literature. Our universities and academies have to hold forth incentives for such work by offering adequate remuneration or formal recognition.

The question may arise: why call Indo-English literature a literature? It is and will be, after all, literature in translation. A translator should not be exalted to the status of a creative writer. I have called this body of translations 'literature' for several reasons. The kind of translation spoken of here is not the product of electronic brains. It is a spontaneous expression of the human personality. It demands as much creative sensitivity as critical insight. You can only translate effectively a work which you have loved and admired. The delight experienced in translating such a work is as genuine as the delight arising from creative work. The creativity of a translator ranges all the way from the selfless work of translators who play the role of obscure interpreters to the epic novels they have ad-

mired, to the work of Edward Fitzgerald or C. Day Lewis which shines as much by its own genius as by that of Omar or Virgil. Again, this body of translations should not be the sporadic work of isolated individuals. It should rather be a movement, a concerted and organised effort to represent the variety and grandeur of Indian literature in English. This body of writing will not be less natural than Indo-Anglian. On the other hand, it will consist of works of approved excellence and become truly representative. Indo-English literature will be none other than Indian literature in translation. But the phrase 'Indo-English' is a convenient phrase to distinguish it from Indo-Anglian literature.

The serial publications of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, have done much to diffuse a knowledge of Indian thought and culture abroad. The National Book Trust is planning to publish outstanding masterpieces of Indian writing. It would be an excellent idea if these or other organisations in the field planned a series for each of the forms of Indian literature and published translations of masterpieces from all the modern Indian languages.

I cannot help thinking that one of the befitting ways of honouring the message and significance of *Gitanjali* is to create a body of Indo-English writing, which will wear *Gitanjali* as a jewel in its crown.

XVII

INDO-ANGLIAN JOURNALISM AND OTHER INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

INDO-ANGLIAN journalism is an 'Anglo-Indian' enterprise which was gradually 'indo-anglianised'. Indeed, both the Anglo-Indian and Indo-Anglian categories continued to exist side by side for a long time, the one representing the imperial and the other the national point of view. The demarcation in substance has disappeared with Independence and such distinctions as prevail now represent the ideologies that are active in the country.

Indo-Anglian journalism has been frequently stilted in its style and oriental in its idiom and a little antiquated or doubtful in its usage. This is true of our newspapers in English which have a limited or local circulation. There are, of course, the leading dailies and weeklies run from some of our metropolitan cities and these maintain a high standard of English. A good deal of distinguished writing, which appears later in book form, is published serially in some of the weeklies. Articles written by some of our great leaders for newspapers and weeklies almost as a regular feature have been collected into books because of the enduring quality of their substance and style. One remembers in this connection Sri Aurobindo's *New Lamps for Old* and Gandhiji's writings in *Young India* and the *Harijan*. The political views of educated Indians are stimulated or shaped even today by Indo-Anglian dailies and weeklies. It is a fact that Indo-Anglian weeklies and monthly magazines are mainly instrumental in diffusing an interpretation of Indian culture and literature on an all-India basis even now. One may not care much for the short stories published in

their columns and the jokes which one enjoys but also knows are imported material. But the 'middle' pieces and leaders and leaderettes give genuine glimpses of Indian life and are a faithful mirror of Indian thought.

What is the future of Indo-Anglian journalism? We find some of the great publishing concerns in the country conducting dailies and weeklies in English as well as in Hindi, — ensuring a smooth transition from the one to the other, when the time comes for Hindi to replace English. The question of replacement is a thorny problem in this field. It is as tangled as the question of the official language or the medium of instruction in universities or the language of law courts. It is, no doubt, true that there are great dailies and weeklies today in our languages which shape the views of the large majority of people who do not know English. But their standard, either of information or of intellectual fare, is not probably on a par with that of their counterparts in English. Respectability still leans heavily on the side of Indo-Anglian journalism and will continue to do so for many years to come. The picture will be clear only when the national picture relating to the language issue emerges clearly.

Presiding over a Bombay seminar which marked the 11th anniversary of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists on 4th November 1961, Shri S. A. Aye, a veteran journalist, remarked that the Indian language press wielded greater influence in moulding public opinion than the English press in India. He said that newspapers in Indian languages reached the farthest corners of the country, which the English papers could not hope to do. But this claim needs to be clarified in some detail. No one can expect a copy of *The Hindu*, *The Times of India* or *The Hindustan Times* to penetrate into villages in which English is neither understood nor read. It is also true that the bulk of India's population lives in villages. The future therefore clearly belongs to newspapers in the Indian languages. They are bound to mould public opinion in India increasingly.

But the educated Indian and the English-knowing politician still play a prominent part in our public affairs. There are a few teachers, lawyers and officers in every taluka town who read an Indo-Anglian newspaper over their morning cup of tea. It is a habit with them and such habits can hardly be overcome in a day. The circulation of Indo-Anglian newspapers rises higher still at the level of district towns. I think it is fair to say, whether we like it or not, that, while the Indian language newspapers make their appeal to a large number of people among our literate masses, Indo-Anglian newspapers are read and liked by the educated who are largely to be found in taluka and district towns and in big cities. This is the class that still matters a great deal in shaping and voicing public opinion in this country. But to say this is not to deny the importance of wealthy and influential persons in rural areas whom nobody with any political ambitions can afford to ignore; for they can mobilise a large number of votes even if they do not know a word of English.

It has to be remembered in this connection that no regional language newspaper, however large its circulation, can hope to shape public opinion in the neighbouring States. Newspapers in sister languages will do this in their own areas. But there will naturally arise a desire on the part of the regional press to make its impact on an all-India basis, or at least in as many States as possible. The Indo-Anglian newspapers play this role now. But if Hindi becomes the sole official language some day and English withdraws from circulation more and more, one is bound to be confronted with the phenomenon of wealthy regional presses contending with each other to make themselves heard through Hindi or another regional language in other States than their own. That will be a new chapter in the history of Indian journalism.

But one can see that Indo-Anglian journalism has still a good future, though its bulk and range may be somewhat more limited in the years to come. The great

metropolitan cities will continue to have their Indo-Anglian dailies and educated Indians and tourists will read them. The present activity will go on unimpaired till, owing to a new set of circumstances, there grows up a generation that comprehends national news and views better in Hindi than in English. But cultural and learned journals in English will continue to interpret different schools of Indian thought to the elite in India and to students of Indian thought and Indian affairs in other parts of the world.

Another speaker at the Bombay seminar referred to above remarked that there appeared to be a feeling on the part of the public that the Indian language press was "vulgar and wayward" as compared with the Indo-Anglian press. He thought that sincere efforts should be made to remove this wrong impression. While one sympathises with this view, it has to be remembered that, though 'vulgar' and 'wayward' are not exactly the words which can be properly used to describe the deficiencies of the Indian press, the level of its intellectual and cultural awareness is perceptibly lower than that of the Indo-Anglian press. This means at root that the journalists on the staff of the Indo-Anglian press are better educated, more widely travelled and better paid than the others. As the speaker himself said, the Indian language press is poorly equipped. The Indo-Anglian journalist has to be familiar with the current English idiom and keep off 'journalese' that somehow colours the ink in his pen. But the Indian language journalist has to coin new idioms, words and phrases in his language almost every day. The Indo-Anglian journalist will, at his best, be an eminent practitioner working in an established and living tradition. His counterpart in the Indian language press has to be a pioneer at every step. A great future awaits him. But he is at present struggling remotely towards it, walking on slippery ground.

There is another field of Indo-Anglian writing, — that of textbooks and supplementary books on various subjects for university students and for the public

generally. There are also the Primers and Readers and supplementary story books prepared for use in schools.

There are three avenues open in this field to writers and I should like to say a few words about each one of them. In the first place, it is perhaps time that educational and informative books were written in simpler English. Bazaar notes and guides which students rely on for passing their examination use several tricks of the trade which the loose essay-type examination procedure seems to encourage. The writers of these notes and guides rehash and collate standard material on a subject. But they can do work of real significance if they exercise some control on the vocabulary and sentence-patterns which they use. The standard books which students use in the universities, in English or American, are frequently too difficult for them because of their poor equipment in English. A student of Physics, Geology, Chemistry or Economics will be grateful for books giving the same information but within a vocabulary of about 3000 words (excluding technical words) and in simple sentence patterns. The public also will prefer to read simple books for similar reasons, except the select few who have the equipment for better and more sophisticated reading. This will be a legitimate educational activity.

Secondly we may, if we wish to make a more sustained contribution, write in Hindi or in one of the regional languages on subjects like European economic thought or European economic history. Indian books on these and other similar subjects with a world background can hardly compete in excellence with British or American books. But they will enrich regional literatures, which sadly need such enrichment, if they are written in the regional languages. Written in English, they can rarely rise above the level of notes and guides. If they have to be in English, they will serve a useful educational purpose only if they are written in a controlled vocabulary. Ambitious work introducing all the departments of modern scientific knowledge in the regional languages will be work of

pioneering value, even though it may have only a few readers to begin with. There are great possibilities in this line, for the future points to this direction. Work on the same subject in English, in terms of controlled writing, can at best be useful to university students and serve a secondary educational purpose. Even then it calls for hard work and not an easy 'assemblage of parts'. It is necessary that writers, who wish to try their hand in this field, should undergo a course in a linguistic description of English, particularly in structural linguistics, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. They should have plenty of practice in controlled writing, whatever the subject, before they venture to publish work on these lines.

But there is another field of 'applied' literature in which there is need for all the sophisticated writing in English of which an Indian writer is capable. Not only will this be of great educational value. It can even be regarded as an original contribution to knowledge. I have said that books by Indian writers in English, on subjects which lie specially within the province of British or American writers, are frequently superfluous. They are justified only if they have an original contribution to make, which indeed is very rare. But there are numerous fields of study which are peculiarly Indian, — Indian history, Indian economics, Indian literature, and indeed, any field of knowledge with particular reference to India. The Indo-Anglian writer is, in fact, an acknowledged master in this field. A number of standard books on these lines in English by distinguished Indian writers have been published by some of our leading firms and by British and American firms. Pandit Nehru's *Discovery of India* and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's *The Hindu View of Life* are but the most distinguished titles in a list which includes remarkable books on many branches of knowledge. There is an increasing demand for this kind of writing and it is bound to have a wide market abroad besides serving a useful purpose at home. A country like Japan has hardly any advantage of this kind, for she has to depend

mostly on foreigners for translating and interpreting her to the West. We have a tradition in the preparation of excellent books in English. It is in our interest to keep up this tradition and even to enrich it.

XVIII

THE INDO-ANGLIAN LITERARY VISION

WHAT ARE the creative impulses that are active in Indo-
Anglian or Indo-English writing today?

The world knew India for a long time through words like *karma*, *maya* and *nirvana* and imagined that Indians were a quietistic people actively interested in inaction, in wise passiveness, to borrow a phrase from Wordsworth. Only the other day, Mr. Arthur Koestler tried elaborately in his article in *Encounter*, August, 1960, to prove that Yoga is a tortuous and complicated attempt at self-extinction, at suicide. We could not refute charges of this nature for a long time. The Middle Ages were, for us, a protracted agony. They witnessed the arrest of our creative thought in one department of knowledge after another. There was a fragmentation and one-sidedness in our knowledge. The chaotic political conditions of the day and the vivisection of a stagnant society into numberless castes and creeds, along with bewildering, alien impacts that came by sea and by land, stunned us and left us dazed. We prided ourselves on the one thing left us in our all-encompassing ruin, — our wise passiveness.

But things have changed. They have been changing now for over a century and a half. It is no longer true to say that Indians are a wisely or unwisely passive people. The writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru, Sri Aurobindo and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, to name only the foremost figures in an illustrious band, are abundant proof that modern India has a new philosophy. It is not quite new for it goes back to the integration in ancient Indian thought. What struck Romaine Rolland forcibly when he wrote his biography of Swami Vivekanand, — an Indo-

Anglian writer whom we have unduly neglected,— was the fusion in him of contemplation and action, fusion in a monk who belonged to a monastic order and believed that this world is unreal and that God alone is real. But Swami Vivekanand realised God in the service of his people and of humanity.

It is not unusual to find our own writers out-Koëstlering Koestler when they speak of Indian philosophy or Indian mystical poetry. We think it fashionable to emulate the West in its diatribes against Indian thought and sensibility. We can at least study it before condemning it, — study it with open eyes and not with coloured glasses on our noses.

The uniqueness of Indian thought and vision lies in the mystical tradition which has persisted through the centuries. In its typical and comprehensive form, this tradition embraces the whole of life. It is as much this-worldly as otherworldly. It believes as much in earth the mother, as in heaven, the father. It is as interested in *samrajya*, the empire of man over nature and in social regeneration as in *sayujya* or individual liberation. As Sri Aurobindo said in his *The Future Poetry*: "It is in effect a larger cosmic vision, a realising of the godhead in the world and in man, of his divine possibilities as well of the greatness of the power that manifests in what he is. . . The nations that most include and make real these things in their life and culture are the nations of the coming dawn and the poets of whatever tongue and race who most completely see with this vision and speak with the inspiration of its utterance are those who shall be the creators of the poetry of the Future". I should like to submit that, to belittle this vision, is to belittle the choicest gift that India has to give to the world. Indian sufism and Indian Christianity are sure to have a similar message when they embody themselves in modern and enduring art-forms.

Not that other traditions are to be ignored. The humanistic tradition which our writers have inherited from the West has resulted in some fine writing. Prem-

chand and Sharatchandra Chatterjee are illustrative of this trend. It is also seen in Indo-Anglian fiction, though not with the same opulence. The West has only a thin stream of mysticism trickling down to modern times. Its most characteristic expression is a rich and noble humanism. India has, however, found her richest self-expression through a mystical awareness of God, Nature and Man.

There is also a third tradition found in Indo-Anglian writing, — the one rooted in a socialistic inspiration. It started with progressive writing. It is as welcome as the other two strains.

Indo-Anglian journals represent these three trends and the variations within them. The mystical strain is apparent in the pages of *Prabudha Bharata*, the organ of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, *The Aryan Path*, which is the mouthpiece of one of the Indian Theosophical Centres and in *Mother India* and *The Advent* which are published from Sri Aurobindo Asram in Pondicherry. *Sarvodaya* represents the neo-Gandhism of Vinoba Bhave. The *Vishwa Bharati* quarterly from Shantiniketan maintains and interprets the tradition of Tagore.

The humanistic endeavour figures prominently in the pages of *The Quest* and a few other journals. The radical humanism of M. N. Roy has lost its most brilliant exponent after the demise of Roy who was also its founder.

While socialism is the slogan of all, it cannot be said that the socialistic impulse is the inspiration behind any single journal. Its theory of art is generally humanistic. But Marxism has an aesthetics of its own. This figures from time to time in the official publications of the Communist Party of India.

A writer belongs to one or the other of these traditions by virtue of his inspiration, though a label does not exhaust him. Indeed, he may cut across all these divisions and be himself, diving now into the one, now into the other, as it suits his fancy and inclination. A politician is an opportunist and believes in alliances.

But an artist changes only when he passes through a deep, emotional conversion. What is more, he possesses a central personality which feeds all these flames and remains itself. Mysticism, humanism, socialism, — these are words that stand for a theory of life and a doctrine. They are tainted words. Intellectual commerce has used them as current coin and fixed their value. But creative thought and vision refuse to be trammelled by these words. A humanist may have his mystical moments and a mystic may forget his preoccupations with eternity for a moment and just relax into innocent playfulness or good humour. A socialist may stop thinking for a while of the weight of all this incorrigible world and revel in fantasy or romance. There are no sharply defined frontiers in the countries of the human mind.

What matters, from the point of view of art, is this innate sensibility of the artist, his inborn sensitiveness, his creative insight. Andrew Marvell could put in a word for saving Milton's life or Dryden acknowledge defeat at the hands of that master of poetry simply because they were poets first and politicians afterwards. Our Indo-Anglian writers have to be aware of these bonds of brotherhood, of unity. The language of mysticism may differ materially — i.e. spiritually — from that of humanism and the language of both may differ radically from that of Marxism. If inspiration is, for the mystic, a stream flowing down the Mount of Transfiguration, the humanist may understand it simply to mean an integration, a configuration that takes place in the consciousness of the artist. But we have to be familiar with each other's language and ideology. Not all mysticism can be dismissed as 'abstraction', all Marxism as 'propaganda' or all humanism as 'compromise'. Whatever the limitations or excellences of the philosophical position of each school, we have to accept them as the basis of our approach, for the artist has accepted them. We have to study them, if we are not familiar with them. It is only then that we will be in a position to judge whether the philosophic scaffolding, which is inevitably a part of every work of art, stands

meagrely alone or has been vitalised by that sensibility or flash of experience which is the essence of every work of art. Mayakovsky is as much a poet in his own right as C. Day Lewis or Sri Aurobindo. The human mind lends itself to the principle of division, but not that total sensibility which is the birthright of every artist. In an erring world which makes for division rather than harmony, which sets out on its crusades and atomic wars blinded by mind, by religious or political prejudice or by the vital impulse of pride or hatred, it is the deep and tender sensibility of the artist that comes as a saviour, as redeeming grace. It has to be supported by some philosophic frame or the other, as a creeper rests on bamboo lattice-work, for that is the very condition of its manifestation. It does not matter much what manure we use for rearing the plant provided we see the choicest blossom on the tree. It is of the highest importance that this sensibility is recognised wherever it appears and is given the opportunity to work out its miracles of harmony and reconciliation. Neither political prejudices nor philosophic prepossessions should thwart its redeeming power.

This change in critical perspective has to take place all the world over. It is particularly important that this should operate in the Indo-Anglian world of letters, for nowhere else is this clash of ideologies more apparent than in India. The mystical tradition in other countries has been long suppressed and grown feeble. It even makes its appearance surreptitiously as humanism. But there is a receptive climate for the mystical tradition in India. Other traditions, have, in the meanwhile, made their impact on us. They have, about them, the fascination that all new doctrines have. We have therefore to see that poetic sensibility is not pinned and labelled along with the doctrine and thrown into one dustbin because we believe in another.

The English language has linked India with the world. It has conducted sparks of inspiration from the world outside to India and from India to the world. We are blessed with the two-way traffic that English has

afforded us. We have paid a heavy price in the past for this privilege. But in our indignation over the price that has been paid, let us not throw away the privilege that is already ours. We may then have to condemn ourselves like Othello:

“Of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe.”

English is certainly not richer than our tribe. But it is a pearl all the same, and it would be foolish to throw it away.

ENGLISH WORDS

Speech that came like leechcraft
Killing us almost, bleeding us white:
You cleansed our souls soiled with impurities.
You dipped our hearts amid tempestuous seas
Of a purer, dearer delight.

O tongues of fire! You came devouring
Forests of nightshade, sleepers that enmesh,
Trees that never remembered to grow,
And shrubs that were but thornmills in our flesh.
You were the dawn and sunlight filled the spaces
Where owls were hovering.

O winged seeds! You crossed the furrowed seas
To nestle in the warm and silent earth.
Like a golden swarm of fireflies you came,
Pining for a new agony, a new birth.
You blossomed into a nascent loveliness.
You ripened into nectar in fruit-jars
That hung like clustered stars.

O winging words! Like homing bees you borrow,
Grown murmurous, the honey of delight
Pollened within our hearts the coming morrow,

Sweetened within our souls for aeons bright.
You kindle in the far corners of the earth
The music of an ever-deepening chant:
The burthen of a waneless, winterless spring
The gospel of an endless blossoming.

Fathomless words! With Indo-Aryan blood
Tingling in your veins;
The spoils of ages, global merchandise
Mingling in your strains!
You pose the cosmic riddle.
In the beginning was the Word
And the Word was God.
The Word is in the middle
And the Word is Man.
In the end will be the Word
And the Word will be God in Man.

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